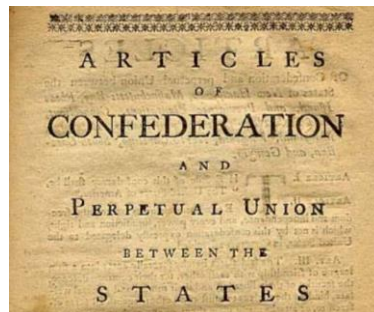




Military History Anniversaries 1 thru 15 MAR

Events in History over the next 15 day period that had U.S. military involvement or impacted in some way on U.S military operations or American interests

- **Mar 01 1781 – American Revolution:** *Articles of Confederation are ratified* » The Articles are finally ratified. They were signed by Congress and sent to the individual states for ratification on November 15, 1777, after 16 months of debate. Bickering over land claims between Virginia and Maryland delayed final ratification for almost four more years. Maryland finally approved the Articles on March 1, 1781, affirming the Articles as the outline of the official government of the United States. The nation was guided by the Articles of Confederation until the implementation of the current U.S. Constitution in 1789.



The critical distinction between the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution—the primacy of the states under the Articles—is best understood by comparing the following lines. The Articles of Confederation begin: *“To all to whom these Present shall come, we the undersigned Delegates of the States”* By contrast, the Constitution begins: *“We the People of the United States do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”*

The predominance of the states under the Articles of Confederation is made even more explicit by the claims of Article II: *“Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.”*

Less than five years after the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, enough leading Americans decided that the system was inadequate to the task of governance that they peacefully overthrew their second government in just over 20 years. The difference between a collection of sovereign states forming a confederation and a federal government created by a sovereign people lay at the heart of debate as the new American people decided what form their government would take.

Between 1776 and 1787, Americans went from living under a sovereign king, to living in sovereign states, to becoming a sovereign people. That transformation defined the American Revolution.

- **Mar 01 1864 – WWI:** *Grant nominated for lieutenant general* » President Abraham Lincoln nominates Ulysses S. Grant for the newly revived rank of lieutenant general. At the time, George Washington was the only other man to have held that rank. Winfield Scott also attained the title but by brevet only; he did not actually command with it.



The promotion carried Grant to the supreme command of Union forces and capped one of the most remarkable success stories of the war. Born in Ohio in 1822, Grant attended West Point and graduated in 1843. He served in the Mexican War in 1847 to 1848 and on the American frontier in the 1850s. During this time, Grant acquired experience in logistics and the supply of troops, developing skills that later made him a success during the Civil War.

When the Civil War erupted, Grant was not in the service and was working as a clerk in his father's store in Galena, Illinois. Grant re-enlisted after Fort Sumter fell in April 1861; his first assignment was to raise troops in Illinois. In June, the governor appointed him colonel of the 21st Illinois. After leading his regiment to protect a railroad in Missouri, Grant was promoted to brigadier general in July 1861. In early 1862, Grant won the first major Union victories of the war when he captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee. For the next two years, he was the most successful general in the Army. His campaign to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi, was one of the most efficient offensives of the war, and the Yankees captured the Mississippi River and most of Tennessee under his leadership.

Lincoln replaced Henry Halleck as the commander of all Union armies when he elevated Grant to the rank of lieutenant general. Unlike Halleck, Grant did not serve from behind a desk; he took the field with the largest Federal force, the Army of the Potomac, as he moved against Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Virginia.

- **Mar 01 1916 – WWI:** Germany begins attacking ships in the Atlantic.
- **Mar 01 1941 – WW2:** Bulgaria signs the Tripartite Pact under threat of a German invasion, allying itself with the Axis powers
- **Mar 01 1942 – WW2:** Three day Battle of Java Sea ends. US suffers a major naval defeat.

- **Mar 01 1944 – WW2:** American and Australian troops win the Battle of Sio (5 Dec – 1 Mar) in New Guinea. Casualties and losses: US/AUS 169 – JP 3695.
- **Mar 01 1945 – WW2:** U.S. infantry regiment captures Mönchengladbach, Germany.
- **Mar 01 1950 – Cold War:** Klaus Fuchs is convicted of spying for the Soviet Union by disclosing top secret atomic bomb data.
- **Mar 01 1954 – Cold War:** The Castle Bravo, a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb, is detonated on Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, resulting in the worst radioactive contamination ever caused by the United State.



The Shrimp (code name Castle Bravo) device in its shot cab

- **Mar 01 1961 – Cold War:** Kennedy establishes Peace Corps » Newly elected President John F. Kennedy issues an executive order establishing the Peace Corps. It proved to be one of the most innovative and highly publicized Cold War programs set up by the United States.

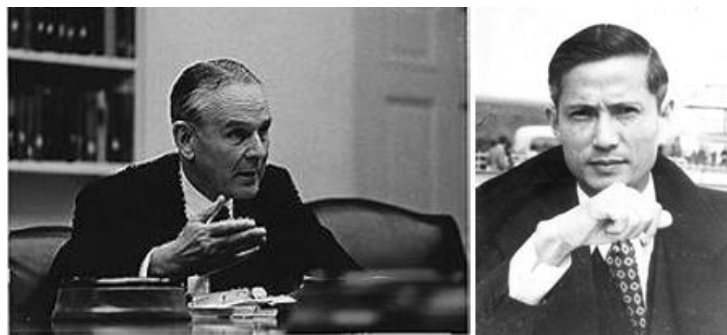
During the course of his campaign for the presidency in 1960, Kennedy floated the idea that a new “army” should be created by the United States. This force would be made up of civilians who would volunteer their time and skills to travel to underdeveloped nations to assist them in any way they could.

To fulfill this plan, Kennedy issued an executive order on March 1, 1961 establishing the Peace Corps as a trial program. Kennedy sent a message to Congress asking for its support and made clear the significance of underdeveloped nations to the United States. The people of these nations were “struggling for economic and social progress.” “Our own freedom,” Kennedy continued, “and the future of freedom around the world, depend, in a very real sense, on their ability to build growing and independent nations where men can live in dignity, liberated from the bonds of hunger, ignorance, and poverty.” Many in Congress, and the U.S. public, were skeptical about the program’s costs and the effectiveness of American aid to what were perceived to be “backward” nations, but Kennedy’s warning about the dangers in the underdeveloped world could not be ignored. Revolutions were breaking out around the globe and many of these conflicts—such as in Laos, the Congo, and elsewhere—were in danger of becoming Cold War battlefields. Several months later, Congress voted to make the Corps permanent.

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Americans—especially young people—flocked to serve in dozens of nations, particularly in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Working side

by side with the people of these nations, Peace Corps volunteers helped build sewer and water systems; constructed and taught in schools; assisted in developing new crops and agricultural methods to increase productivity; and participated in numerous other projects. Volunteers often faced privation and sometimes danger, and they were not always welcomed by foreign people suspicious of American motives. Overall, however, the program was judged a success in terms of helping to “win the hearts and minds” of people in the underdeveloped world. The program continues to function, and thousands of Americans each year are drawn to the humanitarian mission and sense of adventure that characterizes the Peace Corps.

- **Mar 01 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. informs South Vietnam of intent to send Marines* » Ambassador Maxwell Taylor informs South Vietnamese Premier Phan Huy Quat that the United States is preparing to send 3,500 U.S. Marines to Vietnam to protect the U.S. airbase at Da Nang.



Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to “invite” the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council. Thieu approved, but asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” Rumors of the imminent arrival of American troops soon circulated in Saigon, but there was no official word from either government until March 6 when the Johnson administration publicly confirmed that it would be sending the Marines to South Vietnam.

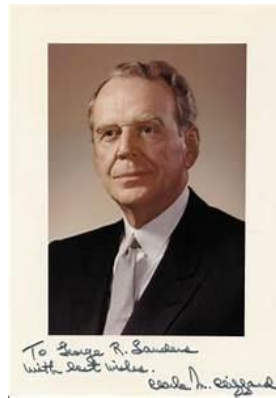
- **Mar 01 1966 – Space Travel:** *Soviet probe crashes into Venus* » Venera 3, a Soviet probe launched from Kazakhstan on November 15, 1965, collides with Venus, the second planet from the sun. Although Venera 3 failed in its mission to measure the Venusian atmosphere, it was the first unmanned spacecraft to reach the surface of another planet. Four years earlier, the U.S. probe Mariner 2 was the first spacecraft to pass close enough to Venus to take scientific measurements of the planet, discovering surface temperatures in excess of 800 degrees Fahrenheit on its surface.



In 1967, Venera 4 succeeded where Venera 3 failed, successfully ejecting several scientific instruments, including a thermometer, a barometer, an atmospheric density gauge, and gas analyzers,

into Venus' atmosphere. Then, in 1970, Venera 7 became the first spacecraft created by humans to soft-land on Venus, successfully sending back images and data for 23 minutes before succumbing to the extremely high temperature and atmospheric pressure found on the planet's surface.

- **Mar 01 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Clifford replaces McNamara* » Clark Clifford replaces Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense. McNamara, who had first taken office under President John F. Kennedy, left amid a debate over Vietnam policy precipitated by the Tet Offensive. In the summer of 1967, McNamara had become convinced that the United States should seek an end to the war through a negotiated settlement. In a memorandum submitted to President Johnson, he recommended that the U.S. freeze its troop levels, cease the bombing of North Vietnam, and turn over responsibility for the ground war to South Vietnam. Johnson rejected these proposals outright. After the communists launched the Tet Offensive in January 1968, an increasingly demoralized McNamara left Washington after eight years as Defense Secretary to become the president of the World Bank. Clifford, a successful Washington lawyer and Democratic Party powerbroker, served as Defense Secretary until January 1969, when he departed with the rest of the Johnson administration.



- **Mar 01 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Bomb explodes in Capitol building* » A bomb explodes in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., causing an estimated \$300,000 in damage but hurting no one. A group calling itself the “Weather Underground” claimed credit for the bombing, which was done in protest of the ongoing U.S.-supported Laos invasion.



WUO Logo

The so-called Weathermen were a radical faction of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); the Weathermen advocated violent means to transform American society. The philosophical foundations of the Weathermen were Marxist in nature; they believed that militant struggle was the key to striking out against the state to build a revolutionary consciousness among the young, particularly the white working class. Their primary tools to achieving these ends were arson and bombing. Among the other targets of Weathermen bombings were the Long Island Court House, the New York Police Department headquarters, the Pentagon, and the State Department. No one was killed in these bombings, because the bombers always called in an advanced warning. However, three

members of the Weather Underground died on March 6, 1970, when the house in which they were constructing the bombs exploded.

- **Mar 01 2002 – Afghanistan:** U.S. invasion of Afghanistan -- Operation Anaconda begins in eastern Afghanistan lasting until 6 MAR. Casualties and losses: U.S. 97 - Taliban 23 confirmed KIA.

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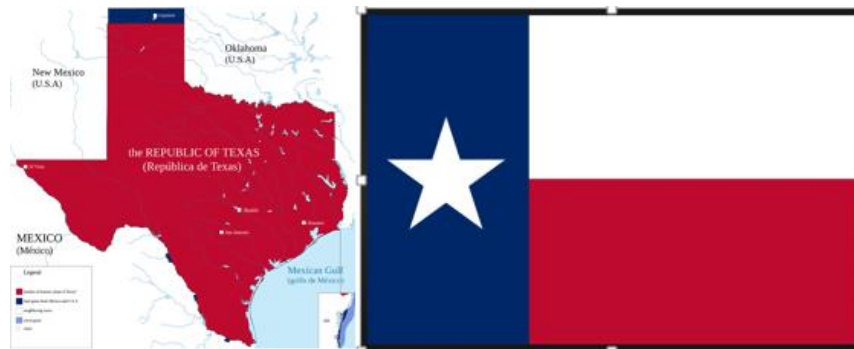
- **Mar 02 1776 – American Revolution:** Patriot militia units arrest the Royal Governor of Georgia James Wright and attempt to prevent capture of supply ships in the Battle of the Rice Boats.
- **Mar 02 1917 – WWI:** Wilson signed the Jones-Shafroth Act, under which Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory and Puerto Ricans were granted statutory citizenship. As citizens, Puerto Ricans could now join the U.S. Army, but few chose to do so. After Wilson signed a compulsory military service act two months later, however, 20,000 Puerto Ricans were eventually drafted to serve during World War I.
- **Mar 02 1836 – Texas*Mexico:** *Texas declares independence* » During the Texas Revolution, a convention of American Texans meets at Washington-on-the-Brazos and declares the independence of Texas from Mexico. The delegates chose David Burnet as provisional president and confirmed Sam Houston as the commander in chief of all Texan forces. The Texans also adopted a constitution that protected the free practice of slavery, which had been prohibited by Mexican law. Meanwhile, in San Antonio, Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's siege of the Alamo continued, and the fort's 185 or so American defenders waited for the final Mexican assault.

In 1820, Moses Austin, a U.S. citizen, asked the Spanish government in Mexico for permission to settle in sparsely populated Texas. Land was granted, but Austin died soon thereafter, so his son, Stephen F. Austin, took over the project. In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain, and Austin negotiated a contract with the new Mexican government that allowed him to lead some 300 families to the Brazos River. Under the terms of the agreement, the settlers were to be Catholics, but Austin mainly brought Protestants from the southern United States. Other U.S. settlers arrived in succeeding years, and the Americans soon outnumbered the resident Mexicans. In 1826, a conflict between Mexican and American settlers led to the Fredonia Rebellion, and in 1830 the Mexican government took measures to stop the influx of Americans. In 1833, Austin, who sought statehood for Texas in the Mexican federation, was imprisoned after calling on settlers to declare it without the consent of the Mexican congress. He was released in 1835.

In 1834, Santa Anna, a soldier and politician, became dictator of Mexico and sought to crush rebellions in Texas and other areas. In October 1835, Anglo residents of Gonzales, 50 miles east of San Antonio, responded to Santa Anna's demand that they return a cannon loaned for defense against Indian attack by discharging it against the Mexican troops sent to reclaim it. The Mexicans were routed in what is regarded as the first battle of the Texas Revolution. The American settlers set up a provisional state government, and a Texan army under Sam Houston won a series of minor battles in the fall of 1835.

In December, Texas volunteers commanded by Ben Milam drove Mexican troops out of San Antonio and settled in around the Alamo, a mission compound adapted to military purposes around 1800. In January 1836, Santa Anna concentrated a force of several thousand men south of the Rio Grande, and Sam Houston ordered the Alamo abandoned. Colonel James Bowie, who arrived at the Alamo on 19 JAN realized that the fort's captured cannons could not be removed before Santa Anna's arrival, so he remained entrenched with his men. By delaying Santa Anna's forces, he also reasoned, Houston would have more time to raise an army large enough to repulse the Mexicans. On 2 FEB, Bowie and his 30 or so men were joined by a small cavalry company under Colonel William Travis, bringing the total number of Alamo defenders to about 140. One week later, the frontiersman Davy Crockett arrived in command of 14 Tennessee Mounted Volunteers.

On 23 FEB, Santa Anna and some 3,000 Mexican troops besieged the Alamo, and the former mission was bombarded with cannon and rifle fire for 12 days. On 24 FEB, in the chaos of the siege, Colonel Travis smuggled out a letter that read: "To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World.... I shall never surrender or retreat.... Victory or Death!" On 1 MAR, the last Texan reinforcements from nearby Gonzales broke through the enemy's lines and into the Alamo, bringing the total defenders to approximately 185. On 2 MAR, Texas' revolutionary government formally declared its independence from Mexico.



In the early morning of 6 MAR, Santa Anna ordered his troops to storm the Alamo. Travis' artillery decimated the first and then the second Mexican charge, but in just over an hour the Texans were overwhelmed, and the Alamo was taken. Santa Anna had ordered that no prisoners be taken, and all the Texan and American defenders were killed in brutal hand-to-hand fighting. The only survivors of the Alamo were a handful of civilians, mostly women and children. Several hundred of Santa Anna's men died during the siege and storming of the Alamo.

Six weeks later, a large Texan army under Sam Houston surprised Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto. Shouting "Remember the Alamo!" the Texans defeated the Mexicans and captured Santa Anna. The Mexican dictator was forced to recognize Texas' independence and withdrew his forces south of the Río Grande. Texas sought annexation by the United States, but both Mexico and antislavery forces in the United States opposed its admission into the Union. For nearly a decade, Texas existed as an independent republic, and Houston was Texas' first elected president. In 1845, Texas joined the Union as the 28th state, leading to the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.

- **Mar 02 1865 – Civil War:** Battle of Waynesboro, Virginia » At the Battle Union General George Custer’s troops rout Confederate General Jubal Early’s force, bringing an end to fighting in the Shenandoah Valley.



The Shenandoah Valley was the scene of many battles and skirmishes during the Civil War. It was located directly in the path of armies invading from the south—as Confederate General Robert E. Lee did during the 1863 Gettysburg campaign—and the north. The fertile valley could sustain armies, and the gentle terrain allowed for rapid troop movement. In 1862, Confederate General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson staged a successful campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, defeating three Yankee armies with quick marching and bold attacks. In 1864, Early drove through the valley to threaten Washington, D.C., as he tried to relieve pressure on Lee, who was pinned down near Richmond, Virginia.

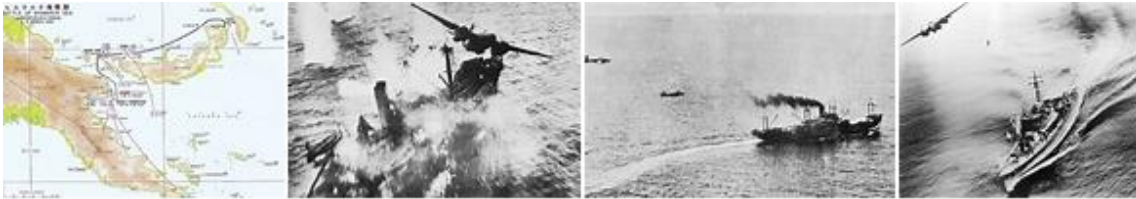
That fall, General Ulysses S. Grant, the Union commander, dispatched General Philip Sheridan to stop Early. At Cedar Creek on October 19, Sheridan achieved his goal. The Confederates were soundly defeated, but the remnants of Early’s force lingered at the southern end of the valley through the winter of 1864 and 1865. Grant ordered Sheridan to move further west and destroy a railroad in southwestern Virginia. As Sheridan marched from the valley, Early sent a few hundred cavalry under General Thomas Rosser to block his path. On 1 MAR, Rosser set fire to a bridge along the middle fork of the Shenandoah River, but Custer, leading the advance units of Sheridan’s army, charged across the burning span and extinguished the fire before the bridge was destroyed.

The next day, Custer followed Sheridan’s orders and chased down the bulk of Early’s force, which numbered about 2,000. Custer and about 5,000 troops found the Confederates entrenched along a ridge near Waynesboro. Part of the Yankee army shelled the Rebel position, while the rest slipped undetected through some woods that stood between Early’s line and the South River. Custer gave the order in the late afternoon, and the Union troops stormed out of the woods and swarmed over the Confederate trenches from the rear. In a short time, a majority of the Confederates were captured and only nine Federal troops were killed. Early and his staff narrowly escaped over the Blue Ridge Mountains, marking the end of the Confederate presence in the Shenandoah Valley.

- **Mar 02 1941 – WW2:** First German military units enter Bulgaria after it joined the Axis Pact.

- **Mar 02 1943 – WW2:** *Battle of the Bismarck Sea* » U.S. and Australian land-based planes begin an offensive against a convoy of Japanese ships in the Bismarck Sea, in the western Pacific.

On 1 MAR U.S. reconnaissance planes spotted 16 Japanese ships en route to Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea. The Japanese were attempting to keep from losing the island and their garrisons there by sending 7,000 reinforcements and aircraft fuel and supplies. But a U.S. bombing campaign, beginning 2 MAR and lasting until the 4 MAR, consisting of 137 American bombers supported by U.S. and Australian fighters, destroyed eight Japanese troop transports and four Japanese destroyers. More than 3,000 Japanese troops and sailors drowned as a consequence, and the supplies sunk with their ships. Of 150 Japanese fighter planes that attempted to engage the American bombers, 102 were shot down. It was an utter disaster for the Japanese—the U.S. 5th Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force dropped a total of 213 tons of bombs on the Japanese convoy.



British Prime Minister Winston Churchill chose 4 MAR, the official end of the battle, to congratulate President Franklin D. Roosevelt, since that day was also the 10th anniversary of the president’s first inauguration. “Accept my warmest congratulations on your brilliant victory in the Pacific, which fitly salutes the end of your first 10 years.”

- **Mar 02 1965 – Vietnam War:** *First Rolling Thunder raid conducted* » Operation Rolling Thunder begins with more than 100 United States Air Force jet bombers striking an ammunition depot at Xom Bang, 10 miles inside North Vietnam. Simultaneously, 60 South Vietnamese Air Force propeller planes bombed the Quang Khe naval base, 65 miles north of the 17th parallel.

Six U.S. planes were downed, but only one U.S. pilot was lost. Capt. Hayden J. Lockhart, flying an F-100, was shot down and became the first Air Force pilot to be taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. Lockhart was released in 1973 when U.S. POWs were returned under provisions of the Paris Peace Accords.

The raid was the result of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s decision in February to undertake the sustained bombing of North Vietnam that he and his advisers had been considering for more than a year. The goal of Rolling Thunder was to interdict North Vietnamese transportation routes in the southern part of North Vietnam and the slow infiltration of personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. In July 1966, Rolling Thunder was expanded to include North Vietnamese ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities as targets and in the spring of 1967 it was further expanded to include power plants, factories, and airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The White House closely controlled Operation Rolling Thunder and President Johnson occasionally selected the targets himself. From 1965 to 1968, about 643,000 tons of bombs were dropped on North Vietnam. A total of nearly 900 U.S. aircraft were lost during Operation Rolling Thunder. The operation continued, with occasional suspensions, until President Johnson halted it on October 31, 1968, under increasing domestic political pressure.

- **Mar 02 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Kennedy proposes plan to end the war* » Senator Robert Kennedy (D-NY) proposes a three-point plan to help end the war. The plan included suspension of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and the gradual withdrawal of U.S. and North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam with replacement by an international force. Secretary of State Dean Rusk rejected Kennedy's proposal because he believed that the North Vietnamese would never agree to withdraw their troops.



Kennedy had been Attorney General under his brother, President John F. Kennedy. When the elder Kennedy was assassinated, Robert stayed on to serve his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, but resigned his post in 1964 to run for the Senate. In the Senate, Kennedy initially continued to support U.S. efforts in Vietnam despite his growing apprehension about the war, especially the massive bombing of North Vietnam, because he was reluctant to disagree with the Johnson administration and its handling of the war. As racial strife and urban violence intensified along with mounting antiwar sentiment, however, Kennedy found it increasingly difficult to remain silent. The presidential campaign of 1968 opened the door for him to act on his concern. When President Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election, Kennedy entered the race, quickly emerging as a serious contender for the presidency. On June 4, 1968, he won the all-important California primary, thereby becoming his party's front-runner. That night, after addressing his supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, he was shot by Sirhan Sirhan. He died the following day at the age of 42.

- **Mar 02 1969 – Cold War:** *Soviet Union and Chinese armed forces clash* » In a dramatic confirmation of the growing rift between the two most powerful communist nations in the world, troops from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China fire on each other at a border outpost on the Ussuri River in the eastern region of the USSR, north of Vladivostok. In the years following this incident, the United States used the Soviet-Chinese schism to its advantage in its Cold War diplomacy.

The cause of the firefight between Soviet and Chinese troops was a matter of dispute. The Soviets charged that Chinese soldiers crossed the border between the two nations and attacked a Soviet outpost, killing and wounding a number of Russian guards. The intruders were then driven back with heavy casualties. The Chinese report indicated that it was the Soviets who crossed the border and were repulsed. Either way, it was the first time that either side openly admitted to a clash of arms along the border, though it had been rumored for years that similar run-ins were occurring. Ever since the early-1960s, relations between the two communist superpowers had deteriorated. China charged

that the Soviet leadership was deviating from the pure path of Marxism, and by the mid-1960s, Chinese leaders were openly declaring that the United States and the Soviet Union were conspiring against the Chinese Revolution.

For the United States, the breakdown of relations between the Soviet Union and China was a diplomatic opportunity. By the early 1970s, the United States began to initiate diplomatic contacts with China. (Relations between the two nations had been severed in 1949 following the successful communist revolution in China.) In 1972, President Richard Nixon surprised the world by announcing that he would visit China. The strongest impetus for this new cordiality toward communist China was the U.S. desire to use the new relationship as leverage in its diplomacy with the Soviet Union, making the Russians more malleable on issues such as arms control and their support of North Vietnam in the on-going Vietnam War. Pitting these two communist giants against one another became a mainstay of U.S. diplomacy in the later Cold War era.

- **Mar 02 1991 – Space Travel:** *Pioneer 10 launched to Jupiter* » The world's first outer-planetary probe, is launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on a mission to Jupiter, the solar system's largest planet. In December 1973, after successfully negotiating the asteroid belt and a distance of 620 million miles, Pioneer 10 reached Jupiter and sent back to Earth the first close-up images of the spectacular gas giant. In June 1983, the NASA spacecraft left the solar system and the next day radioed back the first scientific data on interstellar space. NASA officially ended the Pioneer 10 project on March 31, 1997, with the spacecraft having traveled a distance of some six billion miles.



Headed in the direction of the Taurus constellation, Pioneer 10 will pass within three light years of another star—Ross 246—in the year 34,600 A.D. Bolted to the probe's exterior wall is a gold-anodized plaque, 6 by 9 inches in area, that displays a drawing of a human man and woman, a star map marked with the location of the sun, and another map showing the flight path of Pioneer 10. The plaque, intended for intelligent life forms elsewhere in the galaxy, was designed by astronomer Carl Sagan.

- **Mar 02 1991 – Gulf War:** Battle at Rumaila Oil Field brings end to the 1991 Gulf War.
- **Mar 02 2002 – Iraq War:** U.S. invasion of Afghanistan: Operation Anaconda begins (ending on March 19 after killing 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, with 11 Western troop fatalities).
- **Mar 02 2004 – Iraq War:** Al Qaeda carries out the Ashoura Massacre killing 170 and wounding over 500.



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- **Mar 03 1776 – American Revolution:** Silas Deane, Connecticut delegate to the Continental Congress, leaves for France on a secret mission on this day in 1776. He was, instructed to meet with French Foreign Minister Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes, to stress America’s need for military stores and assure the French that the colonies were moving toward total separation.
- **Mar 03 1776 – American Revolution:** The first amphibious landing of the United States Marine Corps begins the Battle of Nassau.
- **Mar 03 1779 – American Revolution:** The Continental Army is routed at the Battle of Brier Creek near Savannah, Georgia. Casualties and losses: US 377 – GB 16.
- **Mar 03 1845 – Military Appropriations:** *Congress overrides presidential veto for first time* » Congress reins in President John Tyler’s zealous use of the presidential veto, overriding it with the necessary two-thirds vote. This marked Congress’ first use of the Constitutional provision allowing Congressional veto overrides and represented Congress’ parting gift to Tyler as he left office.

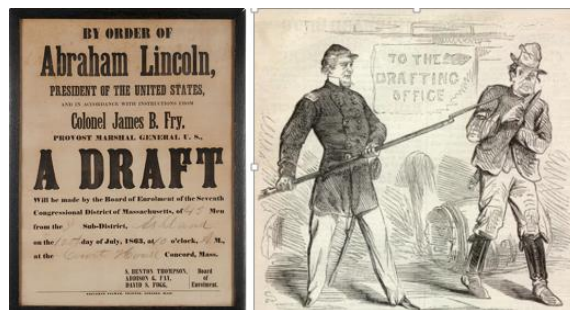
About two weeks earlier, Tyler had vetoed a Congressional bill that would have denied him the power to appropriate federal funds to build revenue-cutter ships without Congress’ approval. With the override, Congress insisted that the executive branch get the legislature’s approval before commissioning any new military craft.



USRC Massachusetts

Tyler used the presidential veto 10 times on a variety of legislation during his administration; the frequency of his use of the veto was second only to that of Andrew Jackson, who employed it 12 times during his tenure.

- **Mar 03 1863 – Civil War:** *Congress passes Civil War conscription act* » During the Civil War, the U.S. Congress passes a conscription act that produces the first wartime draft of U.S. citizens in American history. The act called for registration of all males between the ages of 20 and 45, including aliens with the intention of becoming citizens, by 1 APR. Exemptions from the draft could be bought for \$300 or by finding a substitute draftee. This clause led to bloody draft riots in New York City, where protesters were outraged that exemptions were effectively granted only to the wealthiest U.S. citizens.



Although the Civil War saw the first compulsory conscription of U.S. citizens for wartime service, a 1792 act by Congress required that all able-bodied male citizens purchase a gun and join their local state militia. There was no penalty for noncompliance with this act. Congress also passed a conscription act during the War of 1812, but the war ended before it was enacted. During the Civil War, the government of the Confederate States of America also enacted a compulsory military draft. The U.S. enacted a military draft again during World War I, in 1940 to make the U.S. ready for its involvement in World War II, and during the Korean War. The last U.S. military draft occurred during the Vietnam War.

- **Mar 03 1918 – WWI:** Germany, Austria and Russia sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ending Russia's involvement in World War I, and leading to the independence of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.
- **Mar 03 1931 – National Anthem:** *"The Star-Spangled Banner" becomes official* » President Herbert Hoover signs a congressional act making "The Star-Spangled Banner" the official national anthem of the United States.

On September 14, 1814, Francis Scott Key composed the lyrics to "The Star-Spangled Banner" after witnessing the massive overnight British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Maryland during the War of 1812. Key, an American lawyer, watched the siege while under detainment on a British ship and penned the famous words after observing with awe that Fort McHenry's flag survived the 1,800-bomb assault.

After circulating as a handbill, the patriotic lyrics were published in a Baltimore newspaper on September 20, 1814. Key's words were later set to the tune of "To Anacreon in Heaven," a popular

English song. Throughout the 19th century, “The Star-Spangled Banner” was regarded as the national anthem by most branches of the U.S. armed forces and other groups, but it was not until 1916, and the signing of an executive order by President Woodrow Wilson, that it was formally designated as such. In March 1931, Congress passed an act confirming Wilson’s presidential order, and on March 3 President Hoover signed it into law.

- **Mar 03 1942 – WW2:** Ten Japanese warplanes raid the town of Broome Western Australia killing more than 100 people.
- **Mar 03 1942 – WW2:** USS Perch (SS-176) was forced to scuttle herself after being mortally wounded in a depth charge attack. All crew members (60) were picked up by the Japanese, and sent to Prisoner of War camps. Six crew members of USS Perch (SS-176) died as Prisoners of War.



- **Mar 03 1943 – WW2:** In London, England, 173 people are killed in a crush while trying to enter an air-raid shelter at Bethnal Green tube station.
- **Mar 03 1945 – WW2:** The RAF accidentally bombs the Bezuidenhout neighborhood in The Hague, Netherlands, killing 511 people.
- **Mar 03 1945 – WW2:** The American and Filipino troops liberate Manila, Philippines after 30 days of fighting.
- **Mar 03 1945 – WW2:** *Finland declares war on Germany* » Under increasing pressure from both the United States and the Soviet Union, Finland finally declares war on its former partner, Germany.

After the German invasion of Poland, the USSR, wanting to protect Leningrad more than ever from encroachment by the West—even its dubious Nonaggression Pact partner Germany—began demanding control of various disputed areas from Finland, including part of the Karelian Isthmus (the land bridge that gave access to Leningrad). Finland resisted the Soviet pressure. Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin responded by enacting the “small print” of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Nonaggression Pact the USSR had signed with Germany back in August, which gave the USSR free reign in its “sphere of influence.” The Soviets invaded Finland on November 30, 1939. (Stalin claimed that Finnish troops opened fire on Soviet troops.)



The Finns stunned everyone by beating back the initial Soviet offensive. Although their resistance consisted of only small numbers of trained soldiers (on skis and bicycles!) the refusal to submit made headlines around the world. President Roosevelt quickly extended \$10 million in credit to Finland, while also noting that the Finns were the only people to pay back their World War I war debt to the United States in full. But by the time the Soviets had a chance to regroup and send in massive reinforcements, the Finnish resistance was spent. In March 1940, negotiations with the Soviets began, and Finland signed the Treaty of Moscow, which handed over control of the Karelian Isthmus.

As tension increased between Germany and the USSR, Finland saw in Hitler a possible ally in gaining back its lost territory. German troops were allowed on Finnish soil as the Germans prepared for their invasion of the Soviet Union—a war that the Finns joined. Although Finnish troops captured large areas of East Karelia back from the Soviet Union, they were reluctant to trespass the old borders of 1939 and help Germany in the siege of Leningrad.

But repeated German setbacks resulted in putting the Soviet Union on the offensive again. Shortly after the Red Army broke through to the Karelian Isthmus in June 1944, the Finnish president, Risto Ryti, resigned. (Around this same time, the United States broke off relations with Finland after repeated demands that Ryti renounce his alliance with Germany were rebuffed.) Ryti's successor, Gustaf Mannerheim, immediately sued for an armistice with the Soviet Union. This was signed on September 19, 1944; Finland agreed to the terms of the 1940 Treaty of Moscow and to throw all German troops off Finnish soil. The final act of capitulation came on March 3, 1945, with a formal declaration of war against the already dying Germany.

- **Mar 03 1945 – Cold War:** In a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a New York state law that prohibits communists from teaching in public schools. Coming at the height of the Red Scare in the United States, the Supreme Court decision was additional evidence that many Americans were concerned about possible subversive communist activity in their country.
- **Mar 03 1965 – Vietnam:** *Ho Chi Minh Trail* » The Ho Chi Minh Trail was a military supply route running from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia to South Vietnam. The route sent weapons, manpower, ammunition and other supplies from communist-led North Vietnam to their supporters in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The trail was named after Ho Chi Minh, the president of North Vietnam. During the 1960s, the Ho Chi Minh Trail (actually a network of trails, footpaths and roadways) moved several tons of supplies each day through rugged mountain ranges and dense jungle.

U.S. military forces—aware of the amount of weaponry that the trail supplied to the Viet Cong, its enemies in South Vietnam—had the Ho Chi Minh Trail in its sights as American involvement in Vietnam increased over the 1960s. In 1965, more than 30 U.S. Air Force jets struck targets along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. This was just one part of several American ground and air strikes against

villages and roads along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Since such raids had become common knowledge and were being reported in the American media, the U.S. State Department felt compelled to announce that these controversial missions were authorized by the powers granted to President Lyndon B. Johnson in the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.



But the Johnson administration came under increasing criticism at home and abroad because of the bombing raids along the trail in Laos and Cambodia. Congressional opponents of the Johnson administration thought the president was escalating the war without authorization. There was also an immediate response in the international community. Not surprisingly, communists roundly criticized Johnson's actions. In Havana, Premier Fidel Castro condemned the United States and promised that Cuba would aid North Vietnam. On 4 MAR, about 2,000 students attacked the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

There was also a reaction in non-communist capitals. Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada expressed concern about the risk of escalation, but said that Canada understood the U.S. position. In Britain, however, there was mounting criticism of the government's support of U.S. policies in Vietnam. In New York City, Women Strike for Peace members demonstrated outside the United Nations to urge an end to the war.

Sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail still exist today, and parts of it have been incorporated into the Ho Chi Minh Highway, a paved road that connects the north and south regions of Vietnam.

- **Mar 03 1971 – Vietnam:** *U.S. 5th Special Forces Group withdraws* » The U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) departs South Vietnam. The Special Forces were formed to organize and train guerrilla bands behind enemy lines. President John F. Kennedy, a strong believer in the potential of the Special Forces in counterinsurgency operations, had visited the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg to review the program and authorized the Special Forces to wear the headgear that became their symbol, the Green Beret.

The 5th Group was sent to Vietnam in October 1964 to assume control of all Special Forces operations in Vietnam. Prior to this time, Green Berets had been assigned to Vietnam only on temporary duty. The primary function of the Green Berets in Vietnam was to organize the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) among South Vietnam's Montagnard population. The Montagnards—"mountain people" or "mountaineers"—were a group of indigenous people from

several tribes, such as the Rhade, Bru, and Jarai, who lived mainly in the highland areas of Vietnam. These tribes were recruited to guard camps in the mountainous border areas against North Vietnamese infiltration. At the height of the war the Green Berets oversaw 84 CIDG camps with more than 42,000 CIDG strike forces and local militia units. The CIDG program ended in December 1970 with the transfer of troops and mission to the South Vietnamese Border Ranger Command. The Green Berets were withdrawn as part of the U.S. troop reductions in Vietnam.



- **Mar 03 1980 – U.S. Navy:** The USS Nautilus is decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register.
- **Mar 03 1994 – Somalia:** American soldiers completely withdraw 28 days earlier than expected. Other nations, such as Belgium, France and Sweden, also decided to withdraw at this time.



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- **Mar 04 1776 – American Revolution:** *American forces occupy Dorchester Heights* » Under the cover of constant bombing from American artillery, Brigadier General John Thomas slips 2,000 troops, cannons and artillery into position at Dorchester Heights, just south of Boston, on this day. Under orders from General George Washington, Thomas and his troops worked through the night digging trenches, positioning cannons and completing their occupation of Dorchester Heights.



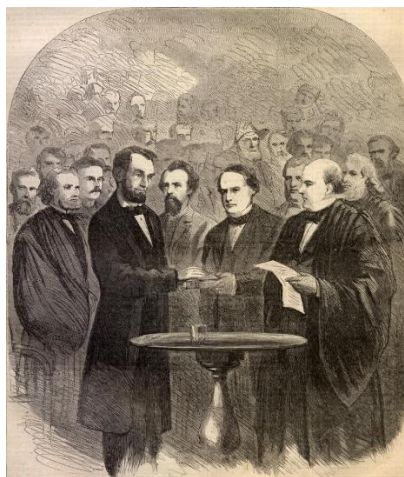
The cannon that made Thomas' efforts possible were those taken by Lieutenant Colonel Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen with his Green Mountain Boys at Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775. Colonel Henry Knox then brought the cannon and powder to Boston through the winter snow in time

for Washington and Thomas to employ them in the engagement at Dorchester Heights. By muffling their wagon-wheels with straw, the Patriots were able to move their cannon unnoticed. Washington would use this same strategy to evade British General Charles Cornwallis after the Battle of Trenton.

At daybreak, British General William Howe received word of the American position overlooking the city. Within days, General Howe came to realize that the American position made Boston indefensible and soon ordered the evacuation of all British troops from the city; the British sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on March 27. Howe and his troops remained in Canada until they traveled to meet Washington in the conflict over New York in August.

In 1898, a Georgian white marble revival tower was commissioned for the site of the battle to memorialize the Patriot victory at Dorchester Heights. The memorial tower has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1966. In 1978, it joined eight other sites in the Boston National Historic Park under the purview of the National Park Service.

- **Mar 04 1861 – Civil War: *Lincoln inaugurated*** » Abraham Lincoln becomes the 16th president of the United States. In his inauguration speech Lincoln extended an olive branch to the South, but also made it clear that he intended to enforce federal laws in the states that seceded.



Since Lincoln's election in November 1860, seven states had left the Union. Worried that the election of a Republican would threaten their rights, especially slavery, the lower South seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. In the process, some of those states seized federal properties such as armories and forts. By the time Lincoln arrived in Washington, D.C., for his inauguration, the threat of war hung heavy in the air. Lincoln took a cautious approach in his remarks, and made no specific threats against the Southern states. As a result, he had some flexibility in trying to keep the states of the upper South—North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware—in the Union.

In his inaugural address, Lincoln promised not to interfere with the institution of slavery where it existed, and pledged to suspend the activities of the federal government temporarily in areas of hostility. However, he also took a firm stance against secession and the seizure of federal property. The government, insisted Lincoln, would “hold, occupy, and possess” its property and collect its taxes. He closed his remarks with an eloquent reminder of the nation's common heritage:

“In your hand, my fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it... We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

Six weeks later, the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Civil War began.

- **Mar 04 1913 – WW1:** *Woodrow Wilson's first inaugural address* » With trouble brewing between the great nations of Europe, Thomas Woodrow Wilson takes office as the 28th president of the United States on this day in 1913, in Washington, D.C.



The Virginia-born son of a Presbyterian minister, Wilson became president of Princeton University in 1902; he resigned the post in 1910 to run successfully for the governorship of New Jersey. Two years later, he won a tight race for the Democratic nomination for president, aided by a split in the Republican Party and the third-party candidacy of former president Theodore Roosevelt. After a vigorous campaign on a reformist platform dubbed New Freedom, Wilson outpolled both Roosevelt and the Republican incumbent, William Howard Taft, though he failed to capture a majority of the popular vote.

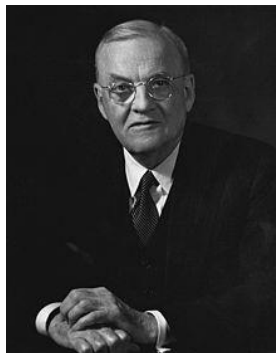
At his inauguration ceremony on March 4, 1913, Wilson made clear his vision of the United States and its people as an exemplary moral force: “Nowhere else in the world have noble men and women exhibited in more striking forms the beauty and the energy of sympathy and helpfulness and counsel in their efforts to rectify wrong, alleviate suffering, and set the weak in the way of strength and hope.” Wilson’s first term as president would be dedicated to pushing through ambitious domestic programs—including the Federal Reserve Act and the creation of the Federal Trade Commission; his second, which began in 1916, would be marked irrevocably by the First World War.

Though Wilson won reelection in 1916 on a platform of strict neutrality, he would soon give himself over completely to his vision of the United States as a powerful moral force that should play an important role in shaping international affairs. German aggression—best exemplified by its policy of unrestricted submarine warfare—provided an impetus for this vision, pushing the president and his

country towards entrance into the war. Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917; the U.S. formally entered the war four days later.

Wilson's famous Fourteen Points—presented in a speech to Congress in January 1918—and his plan for an international organization dedicated to regulating conflicts and preserving peace between nations became the basis, after the armistice, for the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. In the face of tough opposition from conservative opponents in Congress, Wilson was unable to push through ratification of either the treaty or the League in his own country, which greatly lessened its efficacy in the post-war era. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920, an exhausted Wilson suffered a stroke soon after that nearly killed him. He left office in 1921 and died three years later.

- **Mar 04 1941 – WW2:** Operation Claymore. The United Kingdom launches its first large scale British Commando raid on Norway's Lofoten Islands. It proved highly destructive of its target but ultimately a failure in achieving its objective, the capture of an Enigma decoding machine. Casualties and losses: UK 1 – Ger 228 + 10 ships sunk.
- **Mar 04 1943 – WW2:** The Battle of the Bismarck Sea in the South West Pacific comes to an end. Casualties and losses: US/Aus 13 + 2 Bombers & 4 Fighters – JP 2,890 + 8 Transport, 5 Destroyers, & 20 Fighters.
- **Mar 04 1944 – WW2:** The U.S. Eighth Air Force launches the first American bombing raid against the German capital. The British Royal Air Force (RAF) had been conducting night raids against Berlin and other German cities since NOV 1943, suffering losses at increasingly heavy rates. The RAF flew 35 major raids between November 1943 and March 1944 and lost 1,047 aircraft, with an even greater number damaged.
- **Mar 04 1954 – Cold War:** *Dulles asks for action against communism* » Speaking before the 10th Inter-American Conference, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warns that “international communism” is making inroads in the Western Hemisphere and asks the nations of Latin America to condemn this danger. Dulles's speech was part of a series of actions designed to put pressure on the leftist government of Guatemala, a nation in which U.S. policymakers feared communism had established a beachhead.



John Foster Dulles

Dulles was stern and direct as he declared that there was not “a single country in this hemisphere which has not been penetrated by the apparatus of international communism acting under orders from

Moscow.” Communism, he continued, was an “alien despotism,” and he asked the nations of Latin America to “deny it the right to prey upon our hemisphere.” “There is no place here,” he concluded, “for political institutions which serve alien masters.” Though he did not mention it by name, it was clear to most observers that Dulles was targeting Guatemala.

The United States had been concerned about political developments in Guatemala since 1944, when a leftist revolution overthrew long-time dictator Jorge Ubico. In the years since, U.S. policymakers were increasingly fearful that communist elements were growing in power in Guatemala and deeply troubled by government policies that seemed to threaten U.S. business interests that nation. By 1954, Dulles and President Dwight D. Eisenhower were convinced that international communism had established a power base in the Western Hemisphere that needed to be eliminated. As evidence, they pointed to Guatemala’s expropriation of foreign-owned lands and industries, its “socialistic” labor legislation, and vague allegations about Guatemala’s assistance to revolutionary movements in other Latin American nations.

Dulles’s speech did get some results. The Latin American representatives at the meeting passed a resolution condemning “international communism.” As Dulles was to discover, however, the Latin American governments would go no further. In May, Dulles requested that the Organization of American States (OAS) consider taking direct action against Guatemala. The OAS was established in 1948 by the nations of Latin America and the United States to help in settling hemispheric disputes. Dulles’s request fell on deaf ears, however. Despite their condemnation of “international communism,” the other nations of Latin America were reluctant to sanction direct intervention in another country’s internal affairs. At that point, Eisenhower unleashed the Central Intelligence Agency. Through a combination of propaganda, covert bombings, and the establishment of a mercenary force of “counter-revolutionaries” in neighboring Nicaragua and Honduras, the CIA was able to destabilize the Guatemalan government, which fell from power in June 1954. An anti-communist dictatorship led by Carlos Castillo Armas replaced it.

- **Mar 04 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Task Force sends memo to the president* » In a draft memorandum to the president, the Ad Hoc Task Force on Vietnam advises that the administration send 22,000 more troops to Vietnam, but make deployment of the additional 185,000 men previously requested by Gen. William Westmoreland (senior U.S. commander in Vietnam) contingent on future developments.

The Task Force was a group of senior policy advisors including Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford; Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms; General Maxwell Taylor; Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy; and Paul Warnke, head of the Pentagon’s politico-military policy office. President Johnson requested that the Task Force study a request by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General Westmoreland for more than 200,000 additional troops to augment U.S. forces in Vietnam and to strengthen U.S. security in other parts of the world.

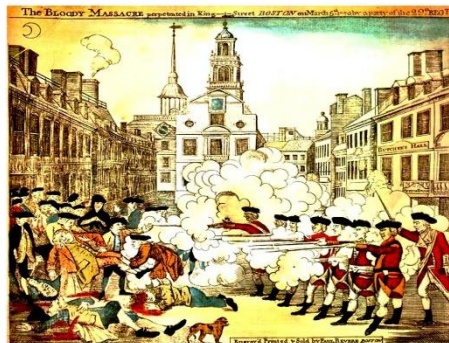
President Johnson asked that the memorandum be sent to General Westmoreland, who, in a reply four days later, welcomed the additional 22,000 troops, but insisted that he still needed the full requested reinforcements by year’s end. Ultimately, President Johnson and his advisers, seeking a way to disengage from the war, refused Westmoreland’s request for more troops.

- **Mar 04 2002 – Afghanistan:** Seven American Special Operations Forces soldiers are killed as they attempt to infiltrate the Shahi Kot Valley on a low-flying helicopter reconnaissance mission.

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- **Mar 05 1770 – American Revolution:** *The Boston Massacre* » On the cold, snowy night of March 5, 1770, a mob of American colonists gathers at the Customs House in Boston and begins taunting the British soldiers guarding the building. The protesters, who called themselves Patriots, were protesting the occupation of their city by British troops, who were sent to Boston in 1768 to enforce unpopular taxation measures passed by a British parliament that lacked American representation.

British Captain Thomas Preston, the commanding officer at the Customs House, ordered his men to fix their bayonets and join the guard outside the building. The colonists responded by throwing snowballs and other objects at the British regulars, and Private Hugh Montgomery was hit, leading him to discharge his rifle at the crowd. The other soldiers began firing a moment later, and when the smoke cleared, five colonists were dead or dying—Crispus Attucks, Patrick Carr, Samuel Gray, Samuel Maverick, and James Caldwell—and three more were injured. Although it is unclear whether Crispus Attucks, an African American, was the first to fall as is commonly believed, the deaths of the five men are regarded by some historians as the first fatalities in the American Revolutionary War.



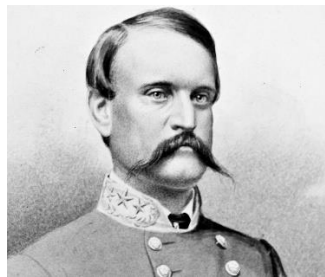
The British soldiers were put on trial, and patriots John Adams and Josiah Quincy agreed to defend the soldiers in a show of support of the colonial justice system. When the trial ended in December 1770, two British soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter and had their thumbs branded with an “M” for murder as punishment.

The Sons of Liberty, a Patriot group formed in 1765 to oppose the Stamp Act, advertised the “Boston Massacre” as a battle for American liberty and just cause for the removal of British troops from Boston. Patriot Paul Revere made a provocative engraving of the incident, depicting the British soldiers lining up like an organized army to suppress an idealized representation of the colonist uprising. Copies of the engraving were distributed throughout the colonies and helped reinforce negative American sentiments about British rule.

In April 1775, the American Revolution began when British troops from Boston skirmished with American militiamen at the battles of Lexington and Concord. The British troops were under orders to capture Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock in Lexington and to confiscate the Patriot arsenal at Concord. Neither missions were accomplished because of Paul Revere and William Dawes, who rode ahead of the British, warning Adams and Hancock and rousing the Patriot minutemen.

Eleven months later, in March 1776, British forces had to evacuate Boston following American General George Washington's successful placement of fortifications and cannons on Dorchester Heights. This bloodless liberation of Boston brought an end to the hated eight-year British occupation of the city. For the victory, General Washington, commander of the Continental Army, was presented with the first medal ever awarded by the Continental Congress. It would be more than five years before the Revolutionary War came to an end with British General Charles Cornwallis' surrender to Washington at Yorktown, Virginia.

- **Mar 05 1864 – Civil War:** *John C. Breckinridge assumes command* » General Breckinridge takes control of Confederate forces in the Appalachian Mountains of western Virginia. The native Kentuckian was a former U.S. senator, U.S. vice president and runner-up to Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election. Breckinridge took over the obscure Western Department of Virginia, where he managed forces until he was elevated to the Confederacy's secretary of war in the closing weeks of the Civil War.



Born in 1821, Breckinridge practiced law, served in the military during the Mexican War (1846-48) and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives at age 30. In 1856, at age 35, Breckinridge became the youngest person elected U.S. vice president; he served under President James Buchanan. In the 1860 presidential election, Breckinridge represented the southern wing of the Democratic Party, which had split during the convention over the issue of slavery. He finished third in the popular vote behind Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, who represented the northern Democrats. (With 72 electoral votes, Breckinridge finished second behind Lincoln in electoral voting.) Although he lost the White House, his home state's legislature selected him as U.S. senator shortly after the election.

During the summer of 1861, Breckinridge remained in the Senate, supporting secessionists' views as the war escalated. In September, Kentucky declared itself a Union state. Having literally become a man without a country, Breckinridge fled to the Confederacy and joined the army. He was made commander of the so-called Orphan Brigade, a collection of Kentucky regiments with soldiers who found themselves geographically cut off from their native state. His unit suffered significant casualties at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee in April 1862, but went on to fight in most of the battles in the Western theater.

After taking control of the Western Department of Virginia, Breckinridge led forces at the Battle of New Market in May 1864, where his army routed a Union force. In October, troops in his department were victorious at the Battle of Saltville, but the victory was tarnished when the Confederates began killing black soldiers during the Union retreat. Breckinridge also served during Jubal Early's 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign.

In February 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis tapped Breckinridge to be secretary of war. He showed great ability in that capacity, but the Confederate cause had become hopeless. Breckinridge oversaw the evacuation of Richmond, Virginia, in March and fled southward with Davis. Unlike Davis, however, Breckinridge successfully escaped the country through Florida and traveled to Cuba. He eventually went on to Europe, where he spent several years before a presidential pardon allowed him to return to Kentucky. Breckinridge worked as a lawyer until his death at age 54 in 1875.

- **Mar 05 1927 – U.S. Marine Corps:** 1,000 US marines land in China to protect American property.
- **Mar 05 1942 – WW2:** US Navy's Mobile Construction Battalions "SEABEES" officially formed and placed in action in New Caledonia an island in the southwest Pacific as they landed and began construction of base facilities.
- **Mar 05 1944 – WW2:** The Red Army begins the Uman-Botoshany Offensive in the western Ukrainian SSR. Casualties and losses: SU 270,000 – Ger 130,000.
- **Mar 05 1945 – WW2:** Allies bomb The Hague, Netherlands. During the 128 raids casualties amounted to 884 killed and a further 631 wounded.
- **Mar 05 1945 – WW2:** US 7th Army Corps capture Cologne, Germany.
- **Mar 05 1946 – Vietnam*France:** Ho Chi Minh signs an agreement with France which recognizes Vietnam as an autonomous state in the Indochinese Federation and the French Union.
- **Mar 05 1946 – Cold War:** *Churchill delivers Iron Curtain speech* » In one of the most famous orations of the Cold War period, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill condemns the Soviet Union's policies in Europe and declares, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent." Churchill's speech is considered one of the opening volleys announcing the beginning of the Cold War.



Churchill, who had been defeated for re-election as prime minister in 1945, was invited to Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri where he gave this speech. President Harry S. Truman joined Churchill on the platform and listened intently to his speech. Churchill began by praising the United States, which he declared stood "at the pinnacle of world power." It soon became clear that a primary purpose of his talk was to argue for an even closer "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain—the great powers of the "English-speaking world"—in organizing and policing the postwar world. In particular, he warned against the expansionistic policies of the Soviet Union. In addition to the "iron curtain" that had descended across Eastern Europe, Churchill spoke of

“communist fifth columns” that were operating throughout western and southern Europe. Drawing parallels with the disastrous appeasement of Hitler prior to World War II, Churchill advised that in dealing with the Soviets there was “nothing which they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness.”

Truman and many other U.S. officials warmly received the speech. Already they had decided that the Soviet Union was bent on expansion and only a tough stance would deter the Russians. Churchill’s “iron curtain” phrase immediately entered the official vocabulary of the Cold War. U.S. officials were less enthusiastic about Churchill’s call for a “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain. While they viewed the English as valuable allies in the Cold War, they were also well aware that Britain’s power was on the wane and had no intention of being used as pawns to help support the crumbling British Empire. In the Soviet Union, Russian leader Joseph Stalin denounced the speech as “war mongering,” and referred to Churchill’s comments about the “English-speaking world” as imperialist “racism.” The British, Americans, and Russians—allies against Hitler less than a year before the speech—were drawing the battle lines of the Cold War.

- **Mar 05 1953 – Russia:** *Joseph Stalin dies* » Leader of the Soviet Union since 1924, Joseph Stalin, dies in Moscow. Ioseb Dzhugashvili was born in 1889 in Georgia, then part of the Old Russian Empire. The son of a drunk who beat him mercilessly and a pious washerwoman mother, Stalin learned Russian, which he spoke with a heavy accent all his life, in an Orthodox Church-run school. While studying to be a priest at Tiflis Theological Seminary, he began secretly reading Karl Marx and other left-wing revolutionary thinkers. In 1900, Stalin became active in revolutionary political activism, taking part in labor demonstrations and strikes. Stalin joined the more militant wing of the Marxist Social Democratic movement, the Bolsheviks, and became a student of its leader, Vladimir Lenin.



Stalin’s first big break came in 1912, when Lenin, in exile in Switzerland, named him to serve on the first Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party—now a separate entity from the Social Democrats. The following year, Stalin (finally dropping Dzugashvili and taking the new name Stalin, from the Russian word for “steel”) published an article on the role of Marxism in the destiny of Russia. In 1917, escaping from an exile in Siberia, he linked up with Lenin and his coup against the middle-class democratic government that had supplanted the czar’s rule. Stalin continued to move up the party ladder, from commissar for nationalities to secretary general of the Central Committee—a role that would provide the center of his dictatorial takeover and control of the party and the new USSR.

Stalin demanded—and got—absolute state control of the economy, as well as greater swaths of Soviet life, until his totalitarian grip on the new Russian empire was absolute. He proceeded to annex parts of Poland, Romania, and Finland, and occupy Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In May 1941, he made himself chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars; he was now the official head of the government and no longer merely head of the party. After Germany’s surrender in April 1945, Stalin

oversaw the continued occupation and domination of much of Eastern Europe, despite “promises” of free elections in those countries.

Stalin did not mellow with age; he pursued a reign of terror, purges, executions, exiles to the Gulag Archipelago (a system of forced-labor camps in the frozen north) and persecution in the postwar USSR, suppressing all dissent and anything that smacked of foreign, especially Western European, influence. To the great relief of many, he died of a massive heart attack on March 5, 1953. He is remembered to this day as the man who helped save his nation from Nazi domination—and as the mass murderer of the century, having overseen the deaths of between 8 million and 20 million of his own people.

- **Mar 05 1964 – Vietnam War:** Premier Chou En-lai of the People’s Republic of China visits Hanoi. After lengthy consultations, Chou and North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong issued a joint communique on 10 MAR, which vowed continued Chinese support for the North Vietnamese struggle against the United States. This support was instrumental in providing the North Vietnamese with weapons and equipment needed for the major offensive they launched in the spring of 1972.



- **Mar 05 1964 – Vietnam War:** *U.S.A.F. advisory team sent to Laos* » The Joint Chiefs of Staff order a U.S. Air Force air commando training advisory team to Thailand to train Lao pilots in counterinsurgency tactics. Laos had won its independence from French control in July 1949 but the country quickly became a battleground as various factions vied for control of the government. One of the factions was the Neo Lao Hak Sat (Lao Liberation Front), communist insurgents more popularly known as the Pathet Lao. President Dwight Eisenhower believed that Laos was “the key to the entire area of Southeast Asia” and was concerned that the government would fall to the communists. The situation was defused somewhat when a conference in Geneva in July 1952 set up a coalition government for Laos and officially proclaimed the neutrality of the country. This eventually proved to be a farce when the North Vietnamese Army moved 80,000 soldiers into Laos to assist the Pathet Lao. The United States then increased its support to the Royal Lao government.

The mission of the American air commandos was to train the Laotian pilots in the conduct of close air support for the Royal Lao ground forces. Since Laos was officially neutral, the training efforts were conducted in Thailand with that government’s permission. The training did not result in sufficient numbers of trained Laotian pilots, so in December 1964, U.S. pilots in American planes began flying support missions for the Laotian ground troops as part of Operation Barrel Roll. The mission continued until February 1973.

- Mar 05 1971 – Vietnam War:** *“Blackhorse” departs South Vietnam* » The U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, less its 2nd Squadron, withdraws from Vietnam. The “Blackhorse Regiment” (named for the black horse on the regimental shoulder patch) first arrived in Vietnam in September 1966 and consisted of three squadrons, each with three armored cavalry troops, a tank troop and a howitzer battery, making it a formidable fighting force. Upon arriving in Vietnam, the regiment had 51 tanks, 296 armored personnel carriers, 18 self-propelled 155-mm howitzers, nine flamethrower vehicles, and 18 helicopters.



While in Vietnam, Blackhorse conducted combat operations in the 11 provinces surrounding Saigon and participated in the Cambodian incursion in 1970. During its combat service in Vietnam, Blackhorse suffered 635 troopers killed in action and 5,521 wounded in action. Three of its troopers won the Medal of Honor for bravery on the battlefield.

Upon its departure from Vietnam, the group was sent to Europe where it was assigned to guard the frontier in West Germany. The regiment’s 2nd Squadron remained in Vietnam until March 1972, when it departed to join the rest of the regiment in Germany.

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- Mar 06 1776 – American Revolution:** *New York demands Sandy Hook lighthouse be dismantled* » A committee of the New York Provincial Congress instructs Major William Malcolm to dismantle the Sandy Hook lighthouse in the then-disputed territory of Sandy Hook, now in New Jersey, on this day in 1776, telling him to “use your best discretion to render the light-house entirely useless.”



The Sandy Hook lighthouse first shone its beam on June 11, 1764, after the Provincial Congress of New York orchestrated two lotteries to raise money for its construction. Discussion about the construction of a lighthouse for Sandy Hook had begun nearly a century before, initiated by Colonial Governor Edmund Andreas. Forty-three New York merchants proposed the lotteries to the Provincial Council, after losing 20,000 pounds sterling from shipwrecks in early 1761.

Major Malcolm’s task was to prevent the lighthouse from helping the British to reach New York City. The Congress wanted Malcolm to remove the lens and lamps so that the lighthouse could no

longer warn ships of possible wreck on the rocky shore; he succeeded. Colonel George Taylor reported six days later that Malcolm had given him eight copper lamps, two tackle falls and blocks, and three casks, and a part of a cast of oil from the dismantling of the beacon.

Malcom's efforts, however, failed to keep the British from invading New York; they were soon able to put the lighthouse back into service by installing lamps and reflectors. The Patriots attempted to knock the light out again on 1 JUN, by placing cannon on boats and attempting to blow away the British paraphernalia. They managed some damage before being chased away.

The new states of New Jersey and New York bickered over ownership of the lighthouse, until the federal government assumed control of all U.S. lighthouses in 1787. As of 1996, the Sandy Hook lighthouse, the oldest original lighthouse in the United States, passed into the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. It remains in operation as part of the Gateway National Recreation Area.

- **Mar 06 1836 – Texas Revolution:** Battle of the Alamo – After a thirteen day siege by an army of 3,000 Mexican troops, the 187 Texas volunteers, including frontiersman Davy Crockett and colonel Jim Bowie, defending the Alamo are killed and the fort is captured. Mexican losses are about 600.



The Alamo, as drawn in 1854.

- **Mar 06 1857 – Pre Civil War:** *Supreme Court rules in Dred Scott case* » The Court hands down its decision on Sanford v. Dred Scott, a case that intensified national divisions over the issue of slavery.

In 1834, Dred Scott, a slave, had been taken to Illinois, a free state, and then Wisconsin territory, where the Missouri Compromise of 1820 prohibited slavery. Scott lived in Wisconsin with his master, Dr. John Emerson, for several years before returning to Missouri, a slave state. In 1846, after Emerson died, Scott sued his master's widow for his freedom on the grounds that he had lived as a resident of a free state and territory. He won his suit in a lower court, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. Scott appealed the decision, and as his new master, J.F.A. Sanford, was a resident of New York, a federal court decided to hear the case on the basis of the diversity of state citizenship represented. After a federal district court decided against Scott, the case came on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which was divided along slavery and antislavery lines; although the Southern justices had a majority.

During the trial, the antislavery justices used the case to defend the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, which had been repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The Southern majority responded by ruling on March 6, 1857, that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional and that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. Three of the Southern justices

also held that African Americans who were slaves or whose ancestors were slaves were not entitled to the rights of a federal citizen and therefore had no standing in court. These rulings all confirmed that, in the view of the nation's highest court, under no condition did Dred Scott have the legal right to request his freedom. The Supreme Court's verdict further inflamed the irrepressible differences in America over the issue of slavery, which in 1861 erupted with the outbreak of the American Civil War.

- **Mar 06 1865 – Civil War:** Battle of Natural Bridge, Florida. Casualties and losses: US 148 - CSA 26.
- **Mar 06 1916 – WWI:** *New German attacks at Verdun: Battle of the Flanks* » During a punishing snowstorm, the German army launches a new attack against French forces on the high ground of Mort-Homme, on the left bank of the Meuse River, near the fortress city of Verdun, France, on this day in 1916. The Battle of Verdun began February 21, 1916, with a German bombardment on the symbolic city of Verdun, the last French stronghold to fall during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Though the Germans had advanced speedily since the start of their advance, capturing Verdun's major protective fort, Fort Douaumont, on 24 FEB, the French were by no means ready to give way, and the battle soon settled into a stalemate, with heavy casualties on both sides. On the night of Douaumont's capture, General Philippe Petain took over the French command of the Verdun sector, vowing to hold the fort at all costs and inflict the maximum number of German casualties in the process. The German objective was similar: in the words of General Erich von Falkenhayn, chief of the general staff, they aimed to bleed the French white.



Germans helping a French wounded soldier

Knowing the Allies planned to launch a major offensive at the Somme River that July, the German high command was determined to keep French troops and resources devoted to the defense of Verdun throughout the spring. To do this, Falkenhayn determined that he needed to change the focus of the German attacks, shifting them from Verdun and the inner ring of forts that protected it—the core of Petain's defensive strategy—to the flanks of the French lines surrounding the city.

To that end, on 6 MAR, after receiving fresh artillery supplies, the Germans attacked along the west bank of the Meuse, beginning the so-called Battle of the Flanks with a preliminary artillery bombardment every bit as intense as the one of 21 FEB. Although under heavy fire from French artillery positions, the Germans managed to cross the river at Brabant and Champneuville to step up their assault on Mort-Homme, which held, though 1,200 French soldiers were captured over the course of two days' fighting. The Germans made good progress in the area in general, however, capturing nearby positions before the French began their aggressive counterattacks. The struggle for Mort-Homme itself went on for more than a month, with thousands dying on both sides of the line, but the Germans never captured the position.

Fighting at Verdun would continue for 10 months, making it the longest battle of World War I. Paul von Hindenburg—who replaced Falkenhayn that summer—finally called a halt to the German attacks on 18 DEC, after more than a million total casualties had been suffered by German and French troops.

- **Mar 06 1943 – WW2:** Battle at Medenine (a.k.a. Operation Capri) North–Africa: Rommel’s assault attack which was abandoned at dusk on the same day after the loss of 52 German tanks.
- **Mar 06 1944 – WW2:** U.S. heavy bombers staged the first full–scale American raid on Berlin.
- **Mar 06 1945 – WW2:** Cologne Germany is captured by American Troops.
- **Mar 06 1945 – WW2:** Members of the Dutch Resistance who were attempting to hijack a truck in Apeldoorn, Holland, ambush Lt. Gen. Hanns Rauter, an SS officer. During the following week, the German SS executed 263 Dutch in retaliation.
- **Mar 06 1965 – Cold War:** Georgi Malenkov succeeds Stalin » Just one day after the death of long-time Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, Georgi Malenkov is named premier and first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Malenkov’s tenure was extremely brief, and within a matter of weeks he was pushed aside by Nikita Khrushchev.



Malenkov was one of the few old-time Bolsheviks who had survived Stalin’s bloody purges of the 1930s. A quiet figure who seemed to prefer working in the background, Malenkov was not taken seriously by many of his peers in the Soviet government, but under Stalin’s watchful eye he proceeded up the Communist Party hierarchy throughout the 1930s and 1940s. By the late-1940s it was widely assumed that he would succeed Stalin. When Stalin died in March 1953, Malenkov took the position of premier and first secretary of the Communist Party. It appeared that he might have a reformist streak, as he called for cuts in military spending and eased up on political repression in the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc nations. These actions might have proved his undoing. In just two weeks, his main political opponent in the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, had organized a coalition of political and military leaders against Malenkov and took over as first secretary.

In February 1955, this same group voted Malenkov out as premier and a Khrushchev puppet, Nikolai Bulganin, took over. Malenkov seethed at this action and in 1957 joined in a plot to overthrow Khrushchev. When the attempt failed, he was dismissed from his government positions

and expelled from the Communist Party. Instead of imprisonment, Malenkov faced the disgrace of being sent to Kazakhstan to serve as the manager of a hydroelectric operation. He died in 1988.

Malenkov was a transition figure from the iron-fisted dictatorship of Joseph Stalin to the more moderate regime instituted by Nikita Khrushchev. In an ironic turn of affairs, Khrushchev eventually supported many of the reforms first put forward by Malenkov.

- **Mar 06 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. is sending Marines to South Vietnam* » The White House confirms reports that, at the request of South Vietnam, the United States is sending two battalions of U.S. Marines for security work at the Da Nang air base, which will hopefully free South Vietnamese troops for combat. On 1 MAR, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor informed South Vietnamese Premier Phan Huy Quat that the United States was preparing to send 3,500 U.S. Marines to Vietnam. Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to “invite” the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council. Thieu approved, but asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” The Marines began landing near Da Nang on 8 MAR.
- **Mar 06 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Operation Lam Son 719 continues* » The Operation reinforced South Vietnamese forces continues the push into Tchepone, a major enemy supply center located on Route 9 in Laos. The base was deserted and almost completely destroyed as a result of American bombing raids.



The operation, begun on 8 FEB, included a limited incursion by South Vietnamese forces into Laos to disrupt the communist supply and infiltration network in Laos along Route 9, adjacent to the two northern provinces of South Vietnam. The operation was supported by U.S. airpower (aviation and airlift) and artillery (firing across the border from firebases inside South Vietnam). Observers described the drive on North Vietnam’s supply routes and depots in Laos as some of the “bloodiest fighting” of the war. Enemy resistance was light at first as a 12,000-man spearhead of the South Vietnamese army thrust its way across the border into the communists’ deepest jungle stronghold toward Tchepone. However, resistance stiffened in the second week of February as the North Vietnamese rushed reinforcements to the area. On 23 FEB, the big push bogged down around 16 miles from the border after bloody fighting in which the communist troops overran two South Vietnamese battalions.

The fierce fighting continued into March and the South Vietnamese finally reached Tchepone. However, fighting near the Vietnam border intensified and in the second week of March, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu gave the order for his troops to withdraw as casualties soared on both sides.

However, withdrawing the ground task force under heavy North Vietnamese pressure was a difficult task. The South Vietnamese fought for two weeks to get back inside their own border and losses were heavy. The South Vietnamese suffered some 9,000 casualties, almost 50 percent of the force. In supporting the South Vietnamese, the U.S. sustained 1,462 casualties and lost 168 helicopters.

- **Mar 06 1991 – Iraq War:** Following Iraq's capitulation in the Persian Gulf conflict Pres Bush told Congress that "aggression is defeated. The war is over"

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- **Mar 07 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas* » Union forces under General Samuel Curtis clash with the army of General Earl Van Dorn at the Battle of Pea Ridge (also called the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern), in northwest Arkansas. The following day, the battle ended in defeat for the Confederates.



Pea Ridge was part of a larger campaign for control of Missouri. Seven months earlier, the Confederates defeated a Union force at Wilson's Creek, some 70 miles northeast of Pea Ridge. General Henry Halleck, the Federal commander in Missouri, now organized an expedition to drive the Confederates from southwestern Missouri. In February 1862, Yankee General Samuel Curtis led the 12,000-man army toward Springfield, Missouri. Confederate General Sterling Price retreated from the city with 8,000 troops in the face of the Union advance. Price withdrew into Arkansas, and Curtis followed him.

Price hooked up with another Rebel force led by General Ben McCulloch, and their combined army was placed under the leadership of General Earl Van Dorn, recently appointed commander of Confederates forces in the trans-Mississippi area. Van Dorn joined Price and McCulloch on March 2, 1862, and ordered an advance on Curtis' army. Curtis received word of the approaching Confederates and concentrated his force around Elkhorn Tavern. Van Dorn sent part of his army on a march around the Yankees. On March 7, McCulloch slammed into the rear of the Union force, but Curtis anticipated the move and turned his men towards the attack. McCulloch was killed during the battle, and the Confederate attack withered. Meanwhile, the other part of Van Dorn's army attacked the front of Curtis' command. Through bitter fighting the Union troops held their ground.

Curtis, suspecting that the Confederates were low on ammunition, attacked the divided Rebel army the following morning. Van Dorn realized he was in danger and ordered a retreat, ending the battle.

The Yankees suffered some 1,380 men killed, wounded, or captured out of 10,000 engaged; the Confederates suffered a loss of about 2,000 out of 14,000 engaged. The Union won a decisive victory that also helped them clear the upper Mississippi Valley region on the way to securing control of the Mississippi River by mid-1863. US 1,384 - CSA 2,000. For a reenactment of the engagement go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMZN8fCiGyI>.

- **Mar 07 1918 – WWI:** *Finland signs treaty with Germany* » Four days after Russia signs a humiliating peace treaty with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, the newly declared independent state of Finland reaches a formal peace settlement with Germany.



Though Finland—a former Swedish duchy ceded to Russian control in 1809, when Russia’s Czar Alexander I attacked and occupied it—did not participate directly in the First World War, Russian troops were garrisoned in the country from the beginning of the conflict. For Finland, the war provided the ultimate opportunity for an emerging nation: independence.

In 1917, with Russia struggling on the battlefield against Germany and in the throes of internal revolution, Finland saw its chance. On November 15, 1917, a newly elected Finnish parliament announced it was assuming all powers formerly held by the Czar-Grand Duke—Nicholas II, who had abdicated the previous March. On December 6, barely a month after Vladimir Lenin’s Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd (later St. Petersburg), the parliament voted to make Finland an independent republic.

Almost immediately, however, conflict broke out within the nascent nation between the radical socialists—supporters of the Bolsheviks in Russia—and non-socialists. With government forces working to disarm and expel the remaining Russian troops stationed in Finland, the radical socialist Red Guard rebelled in late January 1918, terrorizing and killing civilians in their attempt to spark a Bolshevik-style revolution. The clash between the Reds and the Whites, as Finnish government troops were known, ended in victory by the government, due in part to the assistance of German troops sent by the Kaiser to southern Finland.

On March 3, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was concluded, depriving Lenin’s new Soviet state of no less than 1 million square miles of territory that had been part of imperial Russia, including Finland, which was recognized in the treaty by both Russia and the Central Powers as an independent republic. As stated in the treaty, Finland will immediately be cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard, and the Finnish ports of the Russian fleet and of the Russian naval forces. Russia is to put an end to all agitation or propaganda against the Government or the public institutions of Finland. Four days later, the Finnish government signed a separate treaty with Germany, confirming its independence but also solidifying a close relationship and promising German support for Finland to help the new state preserve order.

That close relationship was confirmed the following October, when conservative forces in Finland decided to establish monarchical rule in the country, giving the throne to Frederick, a German prince. One month later, however, when the war ended in the defeat of the Central Powers, it no longer seemed a viable choice: Germany itself was no longer a monarchy, Kaiser Wilhelm having abdicated on November 9, and it was certain that the victorious Allies would not look kindly upon a German prince on the Finnish throne. Frederick abdicated on December 14. The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, recognized Finland's hard-won independence; that July, the Finnish parliament adopted a new republican constitution and Kaarlo J. Stahlberg, a liberal, was elected as the country's first president.

- **Mar 07 1936 – Germany:** *Hitler reoccupies the Rhineland* » Nazi leader Adolf Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact by sending German military forces into the Rhineland, a demilitarized zone along the Rhine River in western Germany.



The Treaty of Versailles, signed in July 1919—eight months after the guns fell silent in World War I—called for stiff war reparation payments and other punishing peace terms for defeated Germany. Having been forced to sign the treaty, the German delegation to the peace conference indicated its attitude by breaking the ceremonial pen. As dictated by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's military forces were reduced to insignificance and the Rhineland was to be demilitarized.

In 1925, at the conclusion of a European peace conference held in Switzerland, the Locarno Pact was signed, reaffirming the national boundaries decided by the Treaty of Versailles and approving the German entry into the League of Nations. The so-called “spirit of Locarno” symbolized hopes for an era of European peace and goodwill, and by 1930 German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann had negotiated the removal of the last Allied troops in the demilitarized Rhineland.

However, just four years later, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party seized full power in Germany, promising vengeance against the Allied nations that had forced the Treaty of Versailles on the German people. In 1935, Hitler unilaterally canceled the military clauses of the treaty and in March 1936 denounced the Locarno Pact and began remilitarizing of the Rhineland. Two years later, Nazi Germany burst out of its territories, absorbing Austria and portions of Czechoslovakia. In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, leading to the outbreak of World War II in Europe.

- **Mar 07 1941 -- WW2:** Prime Minister Winston Churchill diverted troops from Egypt and sent 58,000 British and Aussie troops to occupy the Olympus-Vermion line. But the Brits would be blown out of the Peloponnesus Peninsula when Hitler's forces invaded on the ground and from the air in April. Thousands of British and Australian forces were captured there and on Crete, where German paratroopers landed in May.
- **Mar 07 1942 – WW2:** Japanese troops land on New Guinea.

- **Mar 07 1945 – WW2:** American troops seize the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany.



- **Mar 07 1950 – Cold War:** *Soviet Union denies Klaus Fuchs served as its spy* » Just one week after British physicist Klaus Fuchs was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his role in passing information on the atomic bomb to the Russians, the Soviet Union issues a terse statement denying any knowledge of Fuchs or his activities. Despite the Russian disclaimer, Fuchs’ arrest and conviction led to the uncovering of a network of individuals in the United States and Great Britain who had allegedly engaged in spying activities for the Soviet Union during World War II.



Fuchs worked on developing the atomic bomb during World War II, both in Great Britain and as part of the super-secret Manhattan Project in the United States. In February 1950, British officials arrested him and charged him with passing information concerning the atomic bomb to the Soviets. After his arrest, Fuchs implicated an American, Harry Gold, as someone who served as a courier between himself and Soviet agents. Gold fingered David Greenglass, who also worked on the Manhattan Project, and Greenglass informed on his brother-in-law and sister, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Eventually, Gold and Greenglass were sentenced to jail terms for their roles. The Rosenbergs were convicted and sentenced to death; they were executed in 1953.

The Soviets consistently denied any part in the spy ring. In a statement released on March 7, 1950, the Russians declared that any confession by Fuchs indicating that he was working for the Soviet Union was a “gross fabrication since Fuchs is unknown to the Soviet Government and no ‘agents’ of the Soviet Union had any connection with Fuchs.” The exact level of Soviet spying, as well as the value of any information it succeeded in digging up as a result of such activity, has never been

precisely determined. Fuchs was released from prison in 1959 and spent his remaining years living with his father in East Germany.

- **Mar 07 1951 – Korean War:** Operation Ripper - United Nations troops led by General Matthew Ridgeway begin an assault against Chinese forces in an offensive to straighten out the U.N. front lines against the Chinese.
- **Mar 07 1966 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. jets launch heaviest air raids of the war* » In the heaviest air raids since the bombing began in February 1965, U.S. Air Force and Navy planes fly an estimated 200 sorties against North Vietnam. The objectives of the raids included an oil storage area 60 miles southeast of Dien Bien Phu and a staging area 60 miles northwest of Vinh.
- **Mar 07 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Republic of Korea forces operation launch* » The largest South Korean operation to date starts, forming a link-up of two Korean division areas of operations along the central coastal area of South Vietnam.

South Korean forces had been in South Vietnam since August 1964, when Seoul sent a liaison unit to Saigon. The South Korean contingent was part of the Free World Military Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam. By securing support from other nations, Johnson hoped to build an international consensus behind his policies in Vietnam. The effort was also known as the “many flags” program. The first South Korean contingent was followed in February 1965 by engineer units and a mobile hospital. Although initially assigned to non-combat duties, they came under fire on 3 APR when the Viet Cong attacked them.

In September 1965, in response to additional pleas from Johnson, the South Korean government greatly expanded its troop commitment to Vietnam, agreeing to send combat troops. By the close of 1969 there were over 47,800 Korean soldiers actively involved in combat operations in South Vietnam. Seoul began to withdraw its troops in February 1972, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment to South Vietnam.

- **Mar 07 1968 – Vietnam War:** The Battle of Saigon begins on the day of the Tet Offensive ends.

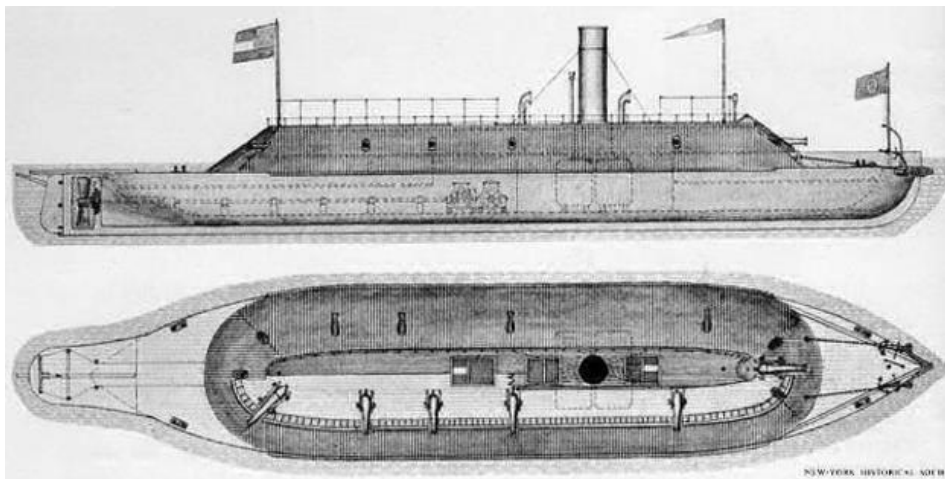


- **Mar 07 1968 – Vietnam War:** The United States and South Vietnamese military begin Operation Truong Cong Dinh to root out Viet Cong forces from the area surrounding My Tho.
- **Mar 07 1971 – Vietnam War:** A thousand U.S. planes bomb Cambodia and Laos.
- **Mar 07 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Jets engage in aerial combat* » In the biggest air battle in Southeast Asia in three years, U.S. jets battle five North Vietnamese MiGs and shoot one down 170 miles north

of the Demilitarized Zone. The 86 U.S. air raids over North Vietnam in the first two months of this year equaled the total for all of 1971.

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- **Mar 08 1777 – American Revolution:** Regiments from Ansbach and Bayreuth Germany, sent to support Great Britain in the War, mutiny in the town of Ochsenfurt.
- **Mar 08 1782 – American Revolution:** Gnadenhütten massacre - Ninety-six Native Americans in Gnadenhütten, Ohio, who had converted to Christianity are killed by Pennsylvania militiamen in retaliation for raids carried out by other Indians. This infamous attack on non-combatants led to a loss of faith in the Patriots by their Indian allies and reprisals upon Patriot captives in Indian custody.
- **Mar 08 1862 – Civil War:** On the second day of the Battle of Pea Ridge Confederate force including some Indian troops under General Earl Van Dorn surprise Union troop but the Union troops win the battle. Casualties & losses: US 1384 - CSA 2000.
- **Mar 08 1862 - Civil War:** *C.S.S. Virginia terrorizes Union navy* » The Confederate ironclad Virginia wreaks havoc on a Yankee squadron off Hampton Roads, Virginia.



The C.S.S. Virginia was originally the U.S.S. Merrimack, a 40-gun frigate launched in 1855. The Merrimack served in the Caribbean and was the flagship of the Pacific fleet in the late 1850s. In early 1860, the ship was decommissioned for extensive repairs at the Gosport Navy Yard in Norfolk, Virginia. It was still there when the Civil War began in April 1861, and Union sailors sank the ship as the yard was evacuated. Six weeks later, a salvage company raised the ship and the Confederates began rebuilding it.

The project required some \$172,000 to build an ironclad upon the Merrimack's hull. A new gun deck was added and an iron canopy was draped over the entire vessel. The most challenging part of the construction came in finding the iron plating. Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia, finally produced it, but the plant had to alter its operations to roll more than 300 tons of scrap iron for the 2-inch thick plating.

The Virginia was launched on February 17, 1862. On 8 MAR, it steamed from Norfolk toward Union ships guarding the mouth of the James River at Hampton Roads. Rumors of the ironclad had circulated for several days among the Yankee sailors, and now they saw the creation first hand. The Virginia attacked the U.S.S. Cumberland, firing several shots into her before ramming the Federal ship and sinking it. The other Union ships fired back, but the shots were, in the words of one observer, “having no more effect than peas from a pop-gun.” Ninety-eight shots hit the Virginia, but none did significant damage. The Virginia then attacked the U.S.S. Congress, which exploded when fires caused by the Confederate barrage reached the powder magazine. The Virginia next ran the U.S.S. Minnesota aground before calling it a day.

It had been the worst day in U.S. naval history and signaled the end of the wooden ship era. But help was on its way—the next day, the Virginia fought the most famous naval duel in history with the U.S.S. Monitor, a Union ironclad that was able to fight the Confederate ship to a draw.

- **Mar 08 1917 – Russia:** *February Revolution begins* » In Russia, the February Revolution (known as such because of Russia’s use of the Julian calendar) begins when riots and strikes over the scarcity of food erupt in Petrograd. One week later, centuries of czarist rule in Russia ended with the abdication of Nicholas II, and Russia took a dramatic step closer toward communist revolution.



By 1917, most Russians had lost faith in the leadership ability of the czarist regime. Government corruption was rampant, the Russian economy remained backward, and Nicholas repeatedly dissolved the Duma, the Russian parliament established after the Revolution of 1905, when it opposed his will. However, the immediate cause of the February Revolution—the first phase of the Russian Revolution of 1917—was Russia’s disastrous involvement in World War I. Militarily, imperial Russia was no match for industrialized Germany, and Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. Meanwhile, the economy was hopelessly disrupted by the costly war effort, and moderates joined Russian radical elements in calling for the overthrow of the czar.

On March 8, 1917, demonstrators clamoring for bread took to the streets in the Russian capital of Petrograd (now known as St. Petersburg). Supported by 90,000 men and women on strike, the protesters clashed with police but refused to leave the streets. On 10 MAR, the strike spread among all of Petrograd’s workers, and irate mobs of workers destroyed police stations. Several factories elected deputies to the Petrograd Soviet, or “council,” of workers’ committees, following the model devised during the Revolution of 1905.

On 11 MAR, the troops of the Petrograd army garrison were called out to quell the uprising. In some encounters, regiments opened fire, killing demonstrators, but the protesters kept to the streets, and the troops began to waver. That day, Nicholas again dissolved the Duma. On 12 MAR, the revolution triumphed when regiment after regiment of the Petrograd garrison defected to the cause of

the demonstrators. The soldiers, some 150,000 men, subsequently formed committees that elected deputies to the Petrograd Soviet.

The imperial government was forced to resign, and the Duma formed a provisional government that peacefully vied with the Petrograd Soviet for control of the revolution. On 14 MAR, the Petrograd Soviet issued “Order No. 1,” which instructed Russian soldiers and sailors to obey only those orders that did not conflict with the directives of the Soviet. The next day, 15 MAR, Czar Nicholas II abdicated the throne in favor of his brother Michael, whose refusal of the crown brought an end to the czarist autocracy.

The new provincial government, tolerated by the Petrograd Soviet, hoped to salvage the Russian war effort while ending the food shortage and many other domestic crises. It would prove a daunting task. Meanwhile, Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik revolutionary party, left his exile in Switzerland and crossed German enemy lines to return home and take control of the Russian Revolution.

- **Mar 08 1942 – WW2:** Japanese troops capture Rangoon Burma.
- **Mar 08 1942 – WW2:** The Dutch ended all resistance after two months of fighting to the superior Japanese forces surrendering on Java. Java’s independence of colonial control became a final fact of history in 1950, when it became part of the newly independent Republic of Indonesia.
- **Mar 08 1943 – WW2:** Japanese forces attack American troops on Hill 700 in Bougainville. The battle will last five days.



- **Mar 08 1965 – Egypt*Israel:** *Egypt reopens the Suez Canal* » Following Israel’s withdrawal from occupied Egyptian territory, the Suez Canal is reopened to international traffic. However, the canal was so littered with wreckage from the Suez Crisis that it took weeks of cleanup by Egyptian and United Nations workers before larger ships could navigate the waterway. The Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean and Red Seas across Egypt, was completed by French engineers in 1869. For the next 88 years, it remained largely under British and French control, and Europe depended on it as an inexpensive shipping route for oil from the Middle East.



In July 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the canal, hoping to charge tolls that would pay for construction of a massive dam on the Nile River. In response, Israel invaded in late October, and British and French troops landed in early November, occupying the canal and other Suez territory. Under pressure from the United Nations, Britain and France withdrew in December, and Israeli forces departed in March 1957. That month, Egypt took over control of the canal and reopened it to commercial shipping. Ten years later, Egypt shut down the canal again following the Six Day War and Israel's occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. It remained closed for eight years, ending when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat reopened it in 1975 after peace talks with Israel.

- **Mar 08 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Marines land at Da Nang* » The USS Henrico, Union, and Vancouver, carrying the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch, take up stations 4,000 yards off Red Beach Two, north of Da Nang.



First ashore was the Battalion Landing Team 3/9, which arrived on the beach at 8:15 a.m. Wearing full battle gear and carrying M-14s, the Marines were met by sightseers, South Vietnamese officers, Vietnamese girls with leis, and four American soldiers with a large sign stating: “Welcome, Gallant Marines.” Gen. William Westmoreland, senior U.S. military commander in Saigon, was reportedly “appalled” at the spectacle because he had hoped that the Marines could land without any fanfare. Within two hours, Battalion Landing Team 1/3 began landing at Da Nang air base.

The 3,500 Marines were deployed to secure the U.S. airbase, freeing South Vietnamese troops up for combat. On March 1, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor had informed South Vietnamese Premier Phan Huy Quat that the United States was preparing to send the Marines to Vietnam. Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to “invite” the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council. Thieu approved, but, like Westmoreland, asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” These wishes were ignored and the Marines were given a hearty, conspicuous welcome when they arrived.

- **Mar 08 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Thieu orders force withdrawal* » South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu orders the withdrawal of South Vietnamese forces from the Central Highlands. In

late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire had been established by the Paris Peace Accords, the North Vietnamese launched Campaign 275. The objective of this campaign was the capture of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands.



A refugee clutches her baby as a government helicopter gunship carries them away near Tuy Hoa, 235 miles northeast of Saigon on March 22, 1975. They were among thousands fleeing from recent Communist advances. With U.S. forces out of the country, North Vietnamese troops tested South Vietnamese defenses (and the willingness of the U.S. to return to the fight) starting in 1974, and began capturing territory.

The battle began on 4 MAR and the North Vietnamese quickly encircled the city. As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire Darlac province, Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what began as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic. The South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally on 30 APR.

- **Mar 08 1982 – Cold War:** *United States accuses Soviets of using poison gas* » The U.S. government issues a public statement accusing the Soviet Union of using poison gas and chemical weapons in its war against rebel forces in Afghanistan. The accusation was part of the continuing U.S. criticism of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Since sending troops into Afghanistan in 1979 in an attempt to prop up a pro-Soviet communist government, the Soviet Union had been on the receiving end of an unceasing string of criticism and diplomatic attacks from the United States government. First the Carter administration, and then the Reagan administration, condemned the Soviets for their intervention in a sovereign nation. Because of the issue, arms control talks had been tabled, the United States had boycotted the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, and diplomatic tension between America and Russia reached alarming proportions.

Reports that the Soviets were using poison gas and chemical weapons in Afghanistan only intensified the heightened tensions. The U.S. government's official statement charged that over 3,000 Afghans had been killed by weapons, including "irritants, incapacitants, nerve agents, phosgene oxime and perhaps mycotoxins, mustard, lewisite and toxic smoke." Evidence to support these charges was largely anecdotal and a number of U.S. scientists had serious doubts about the data put forward by the Reagan administration. Some critics charged that the accusations were a smokescreen

behind which the United States could go forward with further development and stockpiling of its own chemical weapons arsenal.

The U.S. attack must have seemed mildly ironic to the Soviets, who had pilloried America for the use of defoliants and other chemical weapons during its war in Vietnam. By 1982, many Americans were referring to Afghanistan as “Russia’s Vietnam.”

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Stop

- **Mar 09 1781 – American Revolution:** Battle of Pensacola - After successfully capturing British positions in Louisiana and Mississippi, Spanish General Bernardo de Galvez, commander of the Spanish forces in North America, turns his attention to the British-occupied city of Pensacola, Florida. General Galvez and a Spanish naval force of more than 40 ships and 3,500 men landed at Santa Rosa Island and begin a two-month siege of British occupying forces.
- **Mar 09 1847 – Mexican*American War:** *U.S. forces land at Vera Cruz* » During the Mexican-American War, U.S. forces under General Winfield Scott invade Mexico three miles south of Vera Cruz. Encountering little resistance from the Mexicans massed in the fortified city of Vera Cruz, by nightfall the last of Scott’s 10,000 men came ashore without the loss of a single life. It was the largest amphibious landing in U.S. history and not surpassed until World War II.



A 3"/50 gun bombarding Veracruz

The Mexican-American War began with a dispute over the U.S. government’s 1845 annexation of Texas. In January 1846, President James K. Polk, a strong advocate of westward expansion, ordered General Zachary Taylor to occupy disputed territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. Mexican troops attacked Taylor’s forces, and on May 13, 1846, Congress approved a declaration of war against Mexico. In March 1847, General Scott’s forces landed near Vera Cruz, and by 29 MAR, with very few casualties, the Americans had taken the fortified city and its massive fortress, San Juan de Ulua. In April, Scott began his devastating march to Mexico City, which ended on 14 SEP, when U.S. forces entered the Mexican capital and raised the American flag over the Hall of Montezuma.

In February 1848, representatives from the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, formally ending the Mexican War, recognizing Texas as part of the United States and extending the boundaries of the United States west to the Pacific Ocean.

- **Mar 09 1862 – Civil War: *Battle of the Ironclads*** » During the American Civil War, the CSS Virginia, a captured and rebuilt Union steam frigate formerly known as the Merrimac, engages the USS Monitor in the first battle between iron-fortified naval vessels in history.

The Confederate navy’s addition of iron plates to the captured USS Merrimac steam frigate temporarily made it an unstoppable force in the disputed waters of the Civil War. After seeing the Merrimac in action, the Union navy constructed its own ironclad, the USS Monitor. On March 8, 1862, the Virginia attacked a Union squadron of wooden-hulled vessels in Hampton Roads off the Virginia coast. The USS Congress, a frigate, and the USS Cumberland, a sailing sloop, were easily sunk by the Virginia, which suffered no noticeable damage. Late that night, the USS Monitor arrived in the area. With its deck nearly at the water level, the Monitor had an unassuming appearance, but it was a formidable match for the Confederate ironclad.



On 9 MAR, the two vessels engaged each other, and both the Monitor and the Virginia suffered direct hits that failed to penetrate their iron shells. Finally, after four hours, a cannon blast from the Virginia hit the Monitor’s pilothouse, temporarily blinding the ship’s captain, Union Lieutenant John L. Worden. The Virginia was thus allowed to escape to Norfolk, Virginia, and the Battle of the Ironclads ended in a draw. Two months later, the Virginia was trapped in Norfolk by advancing Union forces, and its Confederate crew blew up the fearful vessel rather than allow it to fall into Union hands.

- **Mar 09 1916 – WWI:** Germany declares war on Portugal, who earlier that year honored its alliance with Great Britain by seizing German ships anchored in Lisbon’s harbor.
- **Mar 09 1916 – U.S. Army: *Pancho Villa raids U.S.*** » In the early morning several hundred Mexican guerrillas under the command of Francisco “Pancho” Villa cross the U.S.-Mexican border and attack the small border town of Columbus, New Mexico. Seventeen Americans were killed in the raid, and the center of town was burned. It was unclear whether Villa personally participated in the attack, but President Woodrow Wilson ordered the U.S. Army into Mexico to capture the rebel leader dead or alive.



Before he invaded the United States, Pancho Villa was already known to Americans for his exploits during the Mexican Revolution. He led the famous Division del Norte, with its brilliant cavalry, Los Dorados, and won control of northern Mexico after a series of audacious attacks. In 1914, following the resignation of Mexican leader Victoriano Huerta, Pancho Villa and his former revolutionary ally Venustiano Carranza battled each other in a struggle for succession. By the end of 1915, Villa had been driven north into the mountains, and the U.S. government recognized General Carranza as the president of Mexico.

In January 1916, to protest President Woodrow Wilson's support for Carranza, Villa executed 16 U.S. citizens at Santa Isabel in northern Mexico. Then, in early March, he ordered the raid on Columbus. Cavalry from the nearby Camp Furlong U.S. Army outpost pursued the Mexicans, killing several dozen rebels on U.S. soil and in Mexico before turning back. On 15 MAR, under orders from President Wilson, U.S. Brigadier General John J. Pershing launched a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and disperse his rebels. The expedition eventually involved some 10,000 U.S. troops and personnel. It was the first U.S. military operation to employ mechanized vehicles, including automobiles and airplanes.

For 11 months, Pershing failed to capture the elusive revolutionary, who was aided by his intimate knowledge of the terrain of northern Mexico and his popular support from the people there. Meanwhile, resentment over the U.S. intrusion into Mexican territory led to a diplomatic crisis with the government in Mexico City. On 21 JUN, the crisis escalated into violence when Mexican government troops attacked a detachment of the 10th Cavalry at Carrizal, Mexico, leaving 12 Americans dead, 10 wounded, and 24 captured. The Mexicans suffered more than 30 dead. If not for the critical situation in Europe, war might have been declared. In January 1917, having failed in their mission to capture Villa, and under continued pressure from the Mexican government, the Americans were ordered home.

Villa continued his guerrilla activities in northern Mexico until Adolfo de la Huerta took power over the government and drafted a reformist constitution. Villa entered into an amicable agreement with Huerta and agreed to retire from politics. In 1920, the government pardoned Villa, but three years later he was assassinated at his ranch in Parral.

- **Mar 09 1944 – WW2:** Japanese troops counter-attack American forces on Hill 700 in Bougainville in a battle that would last five days.
- **Mar 09 1945 – WW2:** *Firebombing of Tokyo* » U.S. warplanes launch a new bombing offensive against Japan, dropping 2,000 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo over the course of the next 48 hours. Almost 16 square miles in and around the Japanese capital were incinerated, and between 80,000 and 130,000 Japanese civilians were killed in the worst single firestorm in recorded history.

Early on 9 MAR, Air Force crews met on the Mariana Islands of Tinian and Saipan for a military briefing. They were planning a low-level bombing attack on Tokyo that would begin that evening, but with a twist: Their planes would be stripped of all guns except for the tail turret. The decrease in weight would increase the speed of each Superfortress bomber-and would also increase its bomb load capacity by 65 percent, making each plane able to carry more than seven tons. Speed would be crucial, and the crews were warned that if they were shot down, all haste was to be made for the

water, which would increase their chances of being picked up by American rescue crews. Should they land within Japanese territory, they could only expect the very worst treatment by civilians, as the mission that night was going to entail the deaths of tens of thousands of those very same civilians. “You’re going to deliver the biggest firecracker the Japanese have ever seen,” said U.S. Gen. Curtis LeMay.

The cluster bombing of the downtown Tokyo suburb of Shitamachi had been approved only a few hours earlier. Shitamachi was composed of roughly 750,000 people living in cramped quarters in wooden-frame buildings. Setting ablaze this “paper city” was a kind of experiment in the effects of firebombing; it would also destroy the light industries, called “shadow factories,” that produced prefabricated war materials destined for Japanese aircraft factories.

The denizens of Shitamachi never had a chance of defending themselves. Their fire brigades were hopelessly undermanned, poorly trained, and poorly equipped. At 5:34 p.m., Superfortress B-29 bombers took off from Saipan and Tinian, reaching their target at 12:15 a.m. on March 10. Three hundred and thirty-four bombers, flying at a mere 500 feet, dropped their loads, creating a giant bonfire fanned by 30-knot winds that helped raze Shitamachi and spread the flames throughout Tokyo. Masses of panicked and terrified Japanese civilians scrambled to escape the inferno, most unsuccessfully. The human carnage was so great that the blood-red mists and stench of burning flesh that wafted up sickened the bomber pilots, forcing them to grab oxygen masks to keep from vomiting.



Charred remains of Japanese civilians after the firebombing of Tokyo

The raid lasted slightly longer than three hours. “In the black Sumida River, countless bodies were floating, clothed bodies, naked bodies, all black as charcoal. It was unreal,” recorded one doctor at the scene. Only 243 American airmen were lost—considered acceptable losses.

- **Mar 09 1954 – Cold War:** *Republican senators criticize Joseph McCarthy* » Senate Republicans level criticism at fellow Republican Joseph McCarthy and take action to limit his power. The criticism and actions were indications that McCarthy’s glory days as the most famous investigator of communist activity in the United States were coming to an end.

A Republican senator from Wisconsin, McCarthy had risen to fame in early 1950 when he stated in a speech that there were over 200 known communists operating in the U.S. Department of State. Various other charges and accusations issued forth from McCarthy in the months and years that followed. Although he was notably unsuccessful in discovering communists at work in the United

States, his wild charges and sensational Senate investigations grabbed headlines and his name became one of the most famous in America.

Republicans at first embraced McCarthy and his devastating attacks on the Democratic administration of President Harry S. Truman. However, when McCarthy kept up with his charges about communists in the government after the election of Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952, the party turned against him. Eisenhower himself was particularly disturbed by McCarthy's accusations about communists in the U.S. Army. On March 9, 1954, Republican Senator Ralph Flanders (Vermont) verbally blasted McCarthy, charging that he was a "one-man party" intent on "doing his best to shatter that party whose label he wears." Flanders sarcastically declared, "The junior Senator from Wisconsin interests us all, no doubt about that, but also he puzzles some of us. To what party does he belong? Is he a hidden satellite of the Democratic Party, to which he is furnishing so much material for quiet mirth?" In addition to Flanders' speech, Senate Republicans acted to limit McCarthy's ability to conduct hearings and to derail his investigation of the U.S. Army.

McCarthy's days as a political force were indeed numbered. During his televised hearings into the U.S. Army later in 1954, the American people got their first look at how McCarthy bullied witnesses and ignored procedure to suit his purposes. By late 1954, the Senate censured him, but he remained in office until his death in 1957. His legacy was immense: during his years in the spotlight, he destroyed careers, created a good deal of hysteria, and helped spread fear of political debate and dissent in the United States.

- **Mar 09 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Marines continue to land at Da Nang* » The 3,500 Marines of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch continue to land at Da Nang. The Marines had begun disembarking from the USS *Henrico*, *Union*, and *Vancouver* on 8 MAR and were the first U.S. combat troops in South Vietnam. Among the arrivals on this day were the first U.S. armor in Vietnam—a tank of the 3rd Marine Tank Battalion. More tanks, including those with flame-throwing capability, followed in a few days. There was scattered firing from Viet Cong soldiers hidden ashore as the Marines landed, but no Marines were hit. The Marines were at once assigned to protect the U.S. base at Da Nang, both from the immediate perimeter and from the high ground along a ridge to the west.



Many others eventually joined this initial contingent of Marines. During the course of the war, the Marine Corps deployed one corps-level headquarters, two Marine divisions, two additional Marine regimental landing teams and a reinforced Marine aircraft wing, plus a number of battalion-size Marine special landing forces afloat with the 7th Fleet. Present at the beginning of U.S. commitment

to the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps was also there at the end. In 1975, Marine Corps elements took part in the final evacuation of South Vietnam as the country fell to the North Vietnamese.

- **Mar 09 1966 – Vietnam War:** The North Vietnamese capture a Green Beret camp at Ashau Valley.
- **Mar 09 1968 – Vietnam War:** General William Westmoreland asks for 206,000 more troops in Vietnam.
- **Mar 09 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Marines hand over control of I Corps region* » The U.S. Marines turn over control of the five northernmost provinces in South Vietnam to the U.S. Army. The Marines had been responsible for this area since they first arrived in South Vietnam in 1965. The change in responsibility for this area was part of President Richard Nixon's initiative to reduce U.S. troop levels as the South Vietnamese accepted more responsibility for the fighting. After the departure of the 3rd Marine Division from Vietnam in late 1969, the 1st Marine Division was the only marine division left operating in South Vietnam.
- **MAR 09 1974 – Post WW2:** *Japanese Holdout* - Imperial Japanese Army intelligence officer Hirō "Hiroo" Onoda formerly surrenders. After the war ended he spent 29 years holding out in the Philippines until his former commander traveled from Japan to relieve him from duty.



Onoda trained as an intelligence officer in the commando class "Futamata" of the Nakano School. On 26 December 1944, he was sent to Lubang Island in the Philippines. He was ordered to do all he could to hamper enemy attacks on the island, including destroying the airstrip and the pier at the harbor. Onoda's orders also stated that under no circumstances was he to surrender or take his own life. When he landed on the island, Onoda joined forces with a group of Japanese soldiers who had been sent there previously. The officers in the group outranked Onoda and prevented him from carrying out his assignment, which made it easier for United States and Philippine Commonwealth forces to take the island when they landed on 28 February 1945. Within a short time of the landing, all but Onoda and three other soldiers had either died or surrendered. Onoda, who had been promoted to lieutenant, ordered the men to take to the hills.

Onoda's commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, who had since become a bookseller, flew to Lubang where on 9 March 1974, he finally met with Onoda on 9 MAR and fulfilled the promise made in 1944, "Whatever happens, we'll come back for you," by issuing him the following orders:

- In accordance with the Imperial command, the Fourteenth Area Army has ceased all combat activity.
- In accordance with military Headquarters Command No. A-2003, the Special Squadron of Staff's Headquarters is relieved of all military duties.
- Units and individuals under the command of Special Squadron are to cease military activities and operations immediately and place themselves under the command of the nearest superior officer. When no officer can be found, they are to communicate with the American or Philippine forces and follow their directives.

Upon being properly relieved of duty, he surrendered. He turned over his sword, his functioning Arisaka Type 99 rifle, 500 rounds of ammunition and several hand grenades, as well as the dagger his mother had given him in 1944 to kill himself with if he was captured. Though he had killed people and engaged in shootouts with the police, the circumstances (namely, that he believed that the war was still ongoing) were taken into consideration, and Onoda received a pardon from President Ferdinand Marcos. Only Private Teruo Nakamura, arrested on 18 December 1974 in Indonesia, held out for longer. He was the penultimate Japanese soldier to surrender (with Teruo Nakamura), both surrendering in 1974.

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- **Mar 10 1848 – American Revolution:** The Right Honorable John Stuart dies » The 3rd earl of Bute and advisor to the British king, George III, John Stuart dies in London.



Although most Americans have never heard his name, Lord Bute played a significant role in the politics of the British Empire that spawned the American Revolution. A wealthy Scottish noble, educated at the prestigious Eton College and University of Leiden, Bute became Prince George's tutor in 1755. He also befriended George's mother, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, the dowager princess of Wales. This relationship, although never proven to be sexual, resulted in a tremendous scandal when it was written about by radical English pamphleteer John Wilkes. Wilkes abhorred Bute and named his newspaper *North Briton*, a synonym for Scot, as a direct reference, and insult, to Bute's Scottish origins.

Prince George became King George III in 1760, while Britain was in the midst of the Seven Years' War with France. The king, along with Bute, who was now his advisor, worried that the tremendous expense of the war in North America and around the world would drive Britain to bankruptcy. William Pitt, whose military strategy and political finesse had transformed the American branch of the war, known as the French and Indian War, from disaster to triumph, argued for a

preemptive strike against Spain in 1761 to prevent them from aligning with France. The king, with Bute's guidance, not only rejected Pitt's idea, but forced him to resign. In January 1762, Spain joined the war on the side of France, as Pitt predicted. Despite a resounding victory in North America, the king followed Bute's advice to end the war on other fronts as quickly as possible, returning substantial portions of land. (They might even have returned Canada, if the French had asked for it.) Lambasted by the British press for his poor decision-making, most famously in John Wilkes' 45th edition of the *North Briton*, Bute finally lost the king's trust and resigned upon the signing of the Treaty of Paris in February 1763.

The squabbling between Bute, Pitt and Wilkes had a lasting impact on Anglo-American politics. In 1763, the new first lord of the treasury (or prime minister), George Grenville, attempted to prosecute Wilkes for questioning the king's integrity in *North Briton* No. 45. Meanwhile, Grenville began a program of taxation in the American colonies to help refill Britain's coffers, drained by the expenses of the Seven Years' War. Wilkes' arrest and eventual banishment to France made him a martyr for liberty in the eyes of many Britons at home as well as in those of the American colonists as they strained under the taxes and other costly measures imposed by Grenville's ministry.

- **Mar 10 1848 – Mexican*American War:** The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is ratified by the United States Senate, ending the War.
- **Mar 10 1864 – Civil War:** *Lincoln signs Ulysses S. Grant's commission to command the U.S. Army*
» President Abraham Lincoln signs a brief document officially promoting then-Major General Ulysses S. Grant to the rank of lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, tasking the future president with the job of leading all Union troops against the Confederate Army.

The rank of lieutenant general had not officially been used since 1798; at that time, President John Adams assigned the post to former President George Washington, in anticipation of a possible French invasion of the United States. One of Grant's predecessors in the Civil War, Winfield Scott, had briefly earned the rank, but the appointment was only temporary—really, use of the rank had been suspended after George Washington's death in 1799.

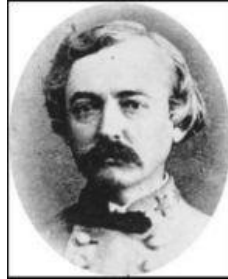
In 1862, Lincoln asked Congress to revive the rank of lieutenant general in order to distinguish between the general in charge of all Union forces and other generals of equal rank who served under him in the field. Congress also wanted to reinstate the rank of lieutenant general, but only if Lincoln gave the rank to Grant. Lincoln had other ideas.

Lincoln preferred to promote then-Commanding General Henry Wagner Halleck to lead the Union Army, which had been plagued by a string of ineffective leaders and terrible losses in battle. He was reluctant to promote Grant and risk boosting the general's popularity; at the time Washington was abuzz with rumors that many northern senators were considering nominating Grant instead of Lincoln at the 1864 Republican National Convention. After Grant publicly dismissed the idea of running for the presidency, Lincoln submitted to Congress' choice and agreed to give Grant the revived rank. As lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, Grant was answerable only to Lincoln. Well-respected by troops and civilians, Grant earned Lincoln's trust and went on to force the South's surrender in 1865.

Although Grant enjoyed a distinguished career in the military, he later wrote that he never consciously chose the life of a soldier. As a student at West Point, he never expected to graduate, let

alone lead the entire U.S. Army in a desperate but ultimately successful struggle to preserve the Union. In 1869, Grant became the 18th president of the United States.

- **Mar 10 1865 – Civil War:** William H. C. Whiting dies » Confederate General William Henry Chase Whiting dies in prison from wounds suffered during the fall of Fort Fisher, North Carolina.



Born in 1824 in Biloxi, Mississippi, Whiting was educated in Boston and at Georgetown College (now University) in Washington, D.C., where he graduated first in his class at age 16. He then entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where in 1845 he again topped his graduating class. Whiting joined the Corps of Engineers and designed coastal fortifications in the West and South, including the defenses for the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. During this project, he married and settled in Wilmington, North Carolina.

When the Civil War began, Whiting offered his services to the Confederacy. He was at Fort Sumter in South Carolina when the Union garrison surrendered at the start of the war. Whiting returned to Wilmington in the summer of 1861 to supervise the construction of defenses for the city, and then moved to northern Virginia as chief engineer for the Confederate army forming there. Whiting was responsible for moving troops from the Shenandoah Valley to Manassas in time for the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. His work was a vital component of the Confederate rout of Union troops there.

Whiting was given command of a division, and his leadership during the Seven Days' Battles in June 1862 earned him the praise of the top Confederate leaders. In November 1862, he was given command of the District of Wilmington, allowing him to return to his North Carolina home. He set about strengthening the city's defenses and constructing Fort Fisher at the Cape Fear River's mouth. Partly due to his efforts, Wilmington was one of the most important blockade running ports for the Confederates throughout the war. Whiting spent the rest of the war in Wilmington, with the exception of a few months in 1864 spent shoring up the defenses around Petersburg, Virginia.

Whiting's Fort Fisher was a formidable barrier to the Union capture of Wilmington. General Benjamin Butler led a Yankee force against Fort Fisher in December 1864, but the garrison fended off the attack. The next month, General Alfred Terry launched another assault; this time, Fort Fisher fell to the Yankees. Whiting was badly wounded and captured during the attack. He was shipped to New York and died on March 10 at age 40 while imprisoned at Governors Island.

- **Mar 10 1917 – WWI:** Less than two weeks after their victorious recapture of the strategically placed city of Kut-al-Amara on the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, British troops under the regional command

of Sir Frederick Stanley Maude bear down on Baghdad, causing their Turkish opponents to begin a full-scale evacuation of the city that evening.

- **Mar 10 1940 – WW2:** *Sumner Welles makes a “peace proposal”* » U.S. Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, after a meeting with Adolf Hitler in Berlin, visits London to discuss a peacemaking proposal with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to prevent a widening of the European war.



Sumner Welles, a diplomat and expert on Latin America, spent his early professional life promoting the United States’ “Good Neighbor” foreign policy as attache to the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, chief of Latin American affairs of the State Department, and commissioner to the Dominican Republic. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him assistant secretary of state, sending him to Cuba, where Welles successfully mediated opposing groups attempting to overthrow the government of Gerardo Machado. He was promoted to undersecretary of state in 1937, serving as a delegate to several Pan-American conferences.

But in 1940, the stakes were raised for Welles. War had broken out in Europe with the German invasion of Poland, and Welles was sent on a fact-finding tour of Berlin, Rome, Paris, and London, in the hopes of keeping the war contained, at the very least, and ideally brought to an end. After a trip to Rome to chat with Benito Mussolini, Welles met with Hitler on March 1-3. Hitler feared that Welles would try to drive a wedge between himself and Axis partner Italy by convincing Mussolini to keep out of the conflict completely. As a result, the Fuhrer bombarded Welles with a propagandistic interpretation of recent events, putting the blame for the European conflict on England and France. Welles informed Hitler that he and Mussolini had engaged in a “long, constructive, and helpful” conversation, and that the Duce believed “there was still a possibility of bringing about a firm and lasting peace.” Hitler agreed that there would be peace-after a German victory in Europe.

Welles left Berlin and arrived in London on 10 MAR. He briefed British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on Hitler’s intransigence, arguing that the only hope for a lasting peace was the progressive disarmament of the belligerents, primarily Germany. Chamberlain’s foreign ministers were less than impressed with the suggestion, believing that even a “disarmed” Germany could still invade a smaller, weaker nation. In short, Welles’ trip accomplished nothing.

- **Mar 10 1945 – WW2:** *The Firebombing of Tokyo continues* » 300 American bombers continue to drop almost 2,000 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo, Japan, in a mission that had begun the previous day. The attack destroyed large portions of the Japanese capital and killed 100,000 civilians. In the closing

months of the war, the United States had turned to incendiary bombing tactics against Japan, also known as “area bombing,” in an attempt to break Japanese morale and force a surrender. The firebombing of Tokyo was the first major bombing operation of this sort against Japan.



B-29s drop firebombs and napalm on Tokyo March 10, 1945 (left) with the resultant burning of large sections of the city (right)

Early in the morning, the B-29s dropped their bombs of napalm and magnesium incendiaries over the packed residential districts along the Sumida River in eastern Tokyo. The conflagration quickly engulfed Tokyo’s wooden residential structures, and the subsequent firestorm replaced oxygen with lethal gases, superheated the atmosphere, and caused hurricane-like winds that blew a wall of fire across the city. The majority of the 100,000 who perished died from carbon monoxide poisoning and the sudden lack of oxygen, but others died horrible deaths within the firestorm, such as those who attempted to find protection in the Sumida River and were boiled alive, or those who were trampled to death in the rush to escape the burning city. As a result of the attack, 10 square miles of eastern Tokyo were entirely obliterated, and an estimated 250,000 buildings were destroyed.

During the next nine days, U.S. bombers flew similar missions against Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe. In August, U.S. atomic attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki finally forced Japan’s hand.

- **Mar 10 1948 – Cold War:** *Strange death of Jan Masaryk* » The communist-controlled government of Czechoslovakia reports that Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk has committed suicide. The story of the noncommunist Masaryk’s death was greeted with skepticism in the West.



Masaryk was born in 1886, the son of Czechoslovakia’s first president. After World War I, he served as foreign minister in the new Czech government. Later he served as the Czech ambassador to Great Britain. During World War II, he once again took the position of foreign minister, this time with the Czech government-in-exile in London. After the war, Masaryk returned to Czechoslovakia to serve as foreign minister under President Eduard Benes. It was a tense time in Masaryk’s native country. The Soviet Union had occupied the nation during World War II and there were fears that the Soviets would try to install a communist

government in Czechoslovakia, as it had in Poland, East Germany, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Masaryk, however, was skillful in dealing with the Soviets, assuring them that a democratic Czechoslovakia posed no security threat to Russia.

In 1947, though, Masaryk made a fatal mistake. When the United States unveiled the Marshall Plan—the multimillion-dollar aid program for postwar Europe—Masaryk indicated Czechoslovakia’s interest in participating. When he informed the Soviets, they absolutely refused to give their approval. This was quickly followed, in February 1948, by a communist coup in Czechoslovakia. President Benes was forced to accept a communist-dominated government. Masaryk was one of the few non-communists left in place. On March 10, 1948, the Czech government reported that Masaryk had committed suicide by jumping out of a third-story window at the Foreign Ministry.

The reaction in the West was characterized by deep suspicion. Secretary of State George Marshall stated that Czechoslovakia was under a “reign of terror,” and that Masaryk’s “suicide” indicated “very plainly what is going on.” Despite suspicions that the communists had murdered Masaryk, nothing has been proven definitively and his death remains one of the great mysteries of the Cold War era.

- **Mar 10 1953 – Korean War:** North Korean gunners at Wonsan fire on the USS Missouri. The ship responds by firing 998 rounds at the enemy position.



- **Mar 10 1959 – China*Tiber:** *Rebellion in Tibet* » Tibetans band together in revolt, surrounding the summer palace of the Dalai Lama in defiance of Chinese occupation forces. China’s occupation of Tibet began nearly a decade before, in October 1950, when troops from its People’s Liberation Army (PLA) invaded the country, barely one year after the Communists gained full control of mainland China. The Tibetan government gave into Chinese pressure the following year, signing a treaty that ensured the power of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the country’s spiritual leader, over Tibet’s domestic affairs. Resistance to the Chinese occupation built steadily over the next several years, including a revolt in several areas of eastern Tibet in 1956. By December 1958, rebellion was simmering in Lhasa, the capital, and the PLA command threatened to bomb the city if order was not maintained.



The March 1959 uprising in Lhasa was triggered by fears of a plot to kidnap the Dalai Lama and take him to Beijing. When Chinese military officers invited His Holiness to visit the PLA headquarters for a theatrical performance and official tea, he was told he must come alone, and that no Tibetan military bodyguards or personnel would be allowed past the edges of the military camp. On 10 MAR, 300,000 loyal Tibetans surrounded Norbulinka Palace, preventing the Dalai Lama from accepting the PLA's invitation. By 17 MAR, Chinese artillery was aimed at the palace, and the Dalai Lama was evacuated to neighboring India. Fighting broke out in Lhasa two days later, with Tibetan rebels hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned. Early on 21 MAR, the Chinese began shelling Norbulinka, slaughtering tens of thousands of men, women and children still camped outside. In the aftermath, the PLA cracked down on Tibetan resistance, executing the Dalai Lama's guards and destroying Lhasa's major monasteries along with thousands of their inhabitants.

China's stranglehold on Tibet and its brutal suppression of separatist activity has continued in the decades following the unsuccessful uprising. Tens of thousands of Tibetans followed their leader to India, where the Dalai Lama has long maintained a government-in-exile in the foothills of the Himalayas.

- **Mar 10 1968 – Vietnam War:** Battle of Lima Site 85, concluding the 11th with largest single ground combat loss of United States Air Force members (12) during that war.
- **Mar 10 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Army captain charged with My Lai war crimes* » The U.S. Army accuses Capt. Ernest Medina and four other soldiers of committing crimes at My Lai in March 1968. The charges ranged from premeditated murder to rape and the “maiming” of a suspect under interrogation. Medina was the company commander of Lt. William Calley and other soldiers charged with murder and numerous crimes at My Lai 4 in Song My village.



William Calley



Capt. Ernest Medina

The My Lai massacre became the most publicized war atrocity committed by U.S. troops in Vietnam. Allegedly, a platoon had slaughtered between 200 and 500 unarmed villagers at My Lai 4, a cluster of hamlets in the coastal lowlands of I Corps Tactical Zone. This was a heavily mined region where Viet Cong guerrillas were firmly entrenched and numerous members of the participating platoon had been killed or maimed during the preceding month.

The company had been conducting a search-and-destroy mission. In search of the 48th Viet Cong (VC) Local Force Battalion, the unit entered My Lai but found only women, children, and old men. Frustrated by unanswered losses due to snipers and mines, the soldiers took out their anger on the

villagers. During the attack, several old men were bayoneted, some women and children praying outside the local temple were shot in the back of the head, and at least one girl was raped before being killed. Many villagers were systematically rounded up and led to a nearby ditch where they were executed.

Reportedly, the killing was only stopped when Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, an aero-scout helicopter pilot, landed his helicopter between the Americans and the fleeing South Vietnamese, confronting the soldiers and blocking them from further action against the villagers. The incident was subsequently covered up, but eventually came to light a year later. An Army board of inquiry headed by Lt. Gen. William Peers investigated the massacre and produced a list of 30 people who knew of the atrocity. Only 14, including Calley and Medina, were eventually charged with crimes. All eventually had their charges dismissed or were acquitted by courts-martial except Calley, who was found guilty of murdering 22 civilians. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but his sentence was reduced to 20 years by the Court of Military Appeals and further reduced later to 10 years by the Secretary of the Army. Proclaimed by much of the public as a “scapegoat,” Calley was paroled in 1974 after having served about three years.

- **Mar 10 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Communists surround Ban Me Thuot* » The North Vietnamese surround and attack the city of Ban Me Thuot, as heavy fighting erupts in the Central Highlands. This action, initiated in late January 1975, just two years after a cease-fire was established by the Paris Peace Accords, was part of what the North Vietnamese called Campaign 275. The battle for Ban Me Thuot began on March 4, when North Vietnamese encircled the city with five main force divisions and effectively cut it off from outside support. The South Vietnamese 23rd Division was vastly outnumbered and quickly succumbed to the communists.

As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire province, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic and the South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally on 30 APR.

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- **Mar 11 1779 – U.S. Army:** *Congress establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* » On this day in 1779, Congress establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help plan, design and prepare environmental and structural facilities for the U.S. Army. Made up of civilian workers, members of the Continental Army and French officers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played an essential role in the critical Revolutionary War battles at Bunker Hill, Saratoga and Yorktown.

The members of the Corps who had joined at the time of its founding in 1779 left the army with their fellow veterans at the end of the War for Independence. In 1794, Congress created a Corps of

Artillerists and Engineers to serve the same purpose under the new federal government. The Corps of Engineers itself was reestablished as an enduring division of the federal government in 1802.

Upon its reestablishment, the Corps began its chief task of creating and maintaining military fortifications. These responsibilities increased in urgency as the new United States prepared for a second war with Britain in the years before 1812. The Corps' greatest contribution during this era was to the defense of New York Harbor—the fortifications it built not only persuaded British naval commanders to stay away from the city during the War of 1812, but later served as the foundations for the Statue of Liberty.

In subsequent years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evolved from providing services for the military to helping map out the uncharted territories that would become the western United States. Beginning in 1824, the Corps also took responsibility for navigation and flood control of the nation's river systems. Today, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is made up of more than 35,000 civilian and enlisted men and women. In recent years, the Corps has worked on rebuilding projects in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the reconstruction of the city of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

- **Mar 11 1863 – Civil War:** Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant give up their preparations to take Vicksburg after failing to pass Fort Pemberton north of Vicksburg.
- **Mar 11 1861 – Civil War:** Confederate constitution adopted » In Montgomery, Alabama, delegates from South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas adopt the Permanent Constitution of the Confederate States of America.

The constitution resembled the Constitution of the United States, even repeating much of its language, but was actually more comparable to the Articles of Confederation—the initial post-Revolutionary War U.S. constitution—in its delegation of extensive powers to the states. The constitution also contained substantial differences from the U.S. Constitution in its protection of slavery, which was “recognized and protected” in slave states and territories. However, in congruence with U.S. policy since the beginning of the 19th century, the foreign slave trade was prohibited. The constitution provided for six-year terms for the president and vice president, and the president was ineligible for successive terms. Although a presidential item veto was granted, the power of the central Confederate government was sharply limited by its dependence on state consent for the use of any funds and resources.

Although Britain and France both briefly considered entering the Civil War on the side of the South, the Confederate States of America, which survived until April 1865, never won foreign recognition as an independent government.

- **Mar 11 1862 – Civil War:** Lincoln shuffles the Union command » The President issues War Order No. 3, a measure making several changes at the top of the Union Army command structure. Lincoln created three departments, placing Henry Halleck in charge of the West, John C. Fremont in command of troops in the Appalachian region, and George McClellan in charge in the East.



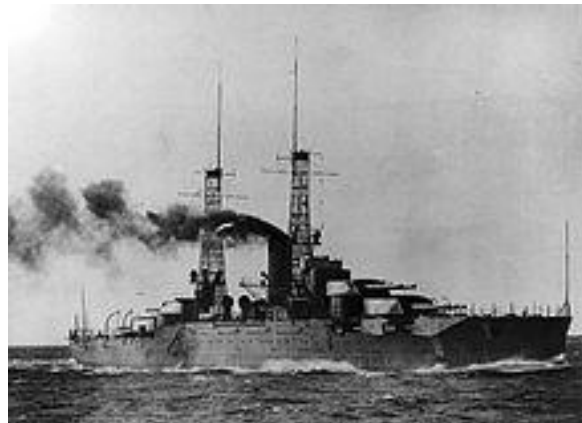
Henry Halleck, John C. Fremont, and George McClellan

The most significant change in the order removed McClellan from his post as general-in-chief of all Union armies, though he retained command of the Army of the Potomac, the most important Union force. McClellan had assumed leadership of that army after it was defeated at the First Battle of Bull Run, Virginia, in July 1861. He quickly installed an efficient command structure and began training an effective fighting force. Three months later, Lincoln elevated McClellan to general-in-chief. However, the relationship between the president and his commanding officer was strained and sometimes contentious. The arrogant McClellan was contemptuous of the president and often ignored Lincoln's communications or kept information from him.

McClellan was stretched thin as general-in-chief, and even he recognized this fact. He was bothered by the March 1862 demotion, but wrote to Lincoln that he would "work just as cheerfully as ever before, and... no consideration of self will in any manner interfere with the discharge of my public duties." For McClellan, this was a rare show of grace and deference towards Lincoln. The move allowed McClellan to spend more time planning his upcoming campaign against the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia.

For a time, there was no general-in-chief, and the three regional commanders reported to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The post did not stay empty for long, though, as Halleck was elevated to general-in-chief five months later.

- **Mar 11 1865 – Civil War:** Union General William Sherman and his forces occupy Fayetteville N.C.
- **Mar 11 1916 – U.S. Navy:** USS Nevada (BB-36) is commissioned. The first US Navy "super-dreadnought".



Nevada during her **running trials** in early 1916

- **Mar 11 1918 – WWI:** Private Albert Gitchell of the U.S. Army reports to the hospital at Fort Riley, Kansas, complaining of the cold-like symptoms of sore throat, fever and headache. By noon, over 100 of his fellow soldiers had reported similar symptoms, marking what are believed to be the first cases in the historic influenza epidemic of 1918. The flu would eventually kill 675,000 Americans and more than 20 million people.
- **Mar 11 1941 – WW2:** FDR signs Lend-Lease » President Roosevelt’s Lend-Lease program, which provides money and materials for allies in the war, goes into effect. It was devised by Roosevelt as a means of aiding Great Britain in its war effort against the Germans, by giving the chief executive the power to “sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of” any military resources the president deemed ultimately in the interest of the defense of the United States. The reasoning was that if a neighbor was successful in defending his home, the security of your home would be enhanced. It also served to bolster British morale by giving them the sense that they were no longer alone in their struggle against Hitler.

The program was finally authorized by Congress and signed into effect on March 11, 1941. By November, after much heated debate, Congress extended the terms of Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union, even though the USSR had already been the recipient of American military weapons and had been promised \$1 billion in financial aid. By the end of the war, more than \$50 billion in funds, weapons, aircraft, and ships had been distributed to 44 countries. After the war, the Lend-Lease program morphed into the Marshall Plan, which allocated funds for the revitalization of “friendly” democratic nations—even if they were former enemies.

- **Mar 12 1942 – WW2:** MacArthur leaves Corregidor » After struggling against great odds to save the Philippines from Japanese conquest, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur abandons the island fortress of Corregidor under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt. Left behind at Corregidor and on the Bataan Peninsula were 90,000 American and Filipino troops, who, lacking food, supplies, and support, would soon succumb to the Japanese offensive.



After leaving Corregidor, MacArthur and his family traveled by boat 560 miles to the Philippine island of Mindanao, braving mines, rough seas, and the Japanese Navy. At the end of the hair-raising 35-hour journey, MacArthur told the boat commander, John D. Bulkeley, “You’ve taken me out of the jaws of death, and I won’t forget it.” On March 17, the general and his family boarded a B-17 Flying Fortress for Northern Australia. He then took another aircraft and a long train ride down to Melbourne. During this journey, he was informed that there were far fewer Allied troops in Australia than he had hoped. Relief of his forces trapped in the Philippines would not be forthcoming. Deeply

disappointed, he issued a statement to the press in which he promised his men and the people of the Philippines, “I shall return.” The promise would become his mantra during the next two and a half years, and he would repeat it often in public appearances.

For his valiant defense of the Philippines, MacArthur was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and celebrated as “America’s First Soldier.” Put in command of Allied forces in the Southwestern Pacific, his first duty was conducting the defense of Australia. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Bataan fell in April, and the 70,000 American and Filipino soldiers captured there were forced to undertake a death march in which at least 7,000 perished. Then, in May, Corregidor surrendered, and 15,000 more Americans and Filipinos were captured. The Philippines–MacArthur’s adopted home–were lost, and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had no immediate plans for their liberation.

After the U.S. victory at the Battle of Midway in June 1942, most Allied resources in the Pacific went to U.S. Admiral Chester Nimitz, who as commander of the Pacific Fleet planned a more direct route to Japan than via the Philippines. Unperturbed, MacArthur launched a major offensive in New Guinea, winning a string of victories with his limited forces. By September 1944, he was poised to launch an invasion of the Philippines, but he needed the support of Nimitz’s Pacific Fleet. After a period of indecision about whether to invade the Philippines or Formosa, the Joint Chiefs put their support behind MacArthur’s plan, which logistically could be carried out sooner than a Formosa invasion.

On October 20, 1944, a few hours after his troops landed, MacArthur waded ashore onto the Philippine island of Leyte. That day, he made a radio broadcast in which he declared, “People of the Philippines, I have returned!” In January 1945, his forces invaded the main Philippine island of Luzon. In February, Japanese forces at Bataan were cut off, and Corregidor was captured. Manila, the Philippine capital, fell in March, and in June MacArthur announced his offensive operations on Luzon to be at an end; although scattered Japanese resistance continued until the end of the war in August. Only one-third of the men MacArthur left behind on March 11, 1942, survived to see his return. “I’m a little late,” he told them, “but we finally came.”

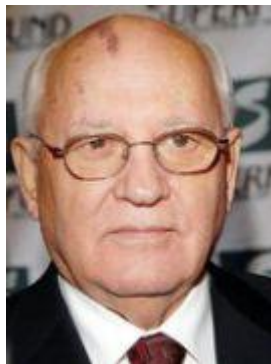
- **Mar 11 1945 – WW2:** The Imperial Japanese Navy attempts a large-scale kamikaze attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored at Ulithi atoll in Operation Tan No. 2.
- **Mar 11 1945 – WW2:** The Empire of Japan established the Empire of Vietnam, a short-lived puppet state, with Bảo Đại as its ruler.
- **Mar 11 1946 – Post WW2:** Rudolf Höss, the first commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp, is captured by British troops.
- **Mar 11 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Heavy battle rages during Operation Junction City* » U.S. 1st Infantry Division troops engage in one of the heaviest battles of Operation Junction City. The fierce fighting resulted in 210 reported North Vietnamese casualties.



Operation Junction City was an effort to smash the communist stronghold in Tay Ninh Province and surrounding areas along the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon. The purpose of the operation was to drive the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops away from populated areas and into the open, where superior American firepower could be more effectively used. Junction City was the largest operation of the war to date, involving more than 25,000 troops.

The first day's operation was supported by 575 aircraft sorties, a record number for a single day in South Vietnam. The operation was marked by one of the largest airmobile assaults in history when 240 troop-carrying helicopters descended on the battlefield. In one of the few airborne operations of the war, 778 "Sky Soldiers" parachuted into the Junction City area of operations 28 miles north of Tay Ninh City. There were 2,728 enemy casualties by the end of the operation on 17 MAR.

- **Mar 11 1985 – Russia:** *Mikhail Gorbachev picked to succeed Chernenko* » Capping his rapid rise through the Communist Party hierarchy, Mikhail Gorbachev is selected as the new general secretary and leader of the Soviet Union, following the death of Konstantin Chernenko the day before. Gorbachev oversaw a radical transformation of Soviet society and foreign policy during the next six years.



Gorbachev was born in 1931, the son of peasant farmers near Stavropol. As a young man he joined the usual Communist Party youth groups. In 1952, he traveled to Moscow to earn his degree in law. Upon his return to his native town of Stavropol, Gorbachev became extremely active in party politics and began a rapid rise through the Communist Party bureaucracy. Part of his success was due to his intelligence, drive, and ability to see and exploit opportunities. He was also aided by his ability to attach himself to important mentors, such as Yuri Andropov, the head of the dreaded KGB—Russia's secret police. With Andropov's support, Gorbachev was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1971.

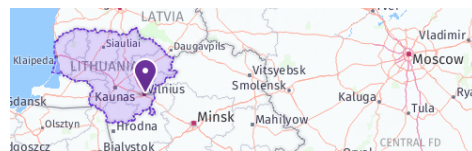
During the next decade and a half, Gorbachev worked hard to promote his own career and to support Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. When Brezhnev died in 1982, Andropov took power.

Gorbachev's role in the new government expanded, and then Andropov died in 1984. It was widely assumed that Gorbachev would be his successor, but his youth, combined with suspicions from some old-line Communist Party officials that the young man was too reform-minded, led to the selection of Konstantin Chernenko. Gorbachev did not have to wait long for a second chance, however. Chernenko died after less than a year in office. With the rapid-fire deaths of Andropov and Chernenko, Gorbachev had outlived his only serious competition, and he was selected to become the new leader of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985."

In the next six years, Gorbachev led the Soviet Union through a dizzying pace of domestic reforms and foreign policy changes. He relaxed political oppression and led the push for reform of the nation's crumbling economic system. On the foreign policy scene, he worked hard to secure better relations with the United States, and in 1987, he and President Ronald Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which reduced the number of medium-range missiles each nation kept in Europe.

The pace of change, however, might have been too rapid. By the late-1980s, the Soviet Union was cracking to pieces. Eastern European satellites were breaking free, various Russian republics were pushing for independence, and the economy was on a downward spiral. In December 1991, Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist.

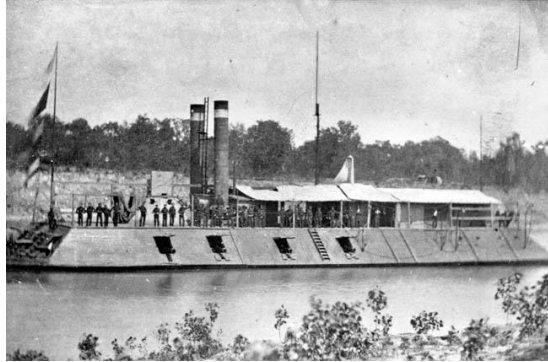
- **Mar 11 1990 – Russia*Lithuania:** *Lithuania proclaims independence* » The first Soviet republic to do so. The Soviet government responded by imposing an oil embargo and economic blockade against the Baltic republic, and later sent troops. Lithuanians have lived along the Nemen River and the Baltic Sea for some 3,000 years, and during the medieval period Lithuania was one of the largest states in Europe, stretching from present-day European Russia to as far as the Black Sea. In the late 14th century, Lithuania united with Poland in forming a commonwealth, and with the third partition of Poland in 1795, Lithuania was absorbed into Russia.



In the 19th century, a Lithuanian linguistic and cultural revival began, and with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Levost between Russia and Germany in 1918, Lithuania achieved independence. For the next two decades, however, Poland, Germany, and the USSR all interfered with Lithuania's affairs. In 1940, Soviet forces occupied the country, but in 1941 the Nazis replaced them. During World War II, many Lithuanians fought alongside the Germans against the Soviet Union, but by 1944 the country was liberated and a pro-Soviet communist regime was installed.

In the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, or "openness," led Lithuania to reassert its identity, and on March 11, 1990, formal independence was proclaimed. Sajudis, a non-communist coalition established in 1988, subsequently won control of the Lithuanian parliament and Vytautas Landsbergis became Lithuania's first post-Soviet head of state. In January 1991, Soviet paratroopers and tanks invaded Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, beginning a standoff that lasted until September 6, 1991, when the crumbling Soviet Union agreed to grant independence to Lithuania and the other Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia.

- **Mar 12 1864 – Civil War: Red River Campaign begins** » One of the biggest military fiascos of the Civil War begins as a combined Union force of infantry and river boats starts moving up the Red River in Louisiana. The month-long campaign was poorly managed and achieved none of the objectives set forth by Union commanders.



The campaign had several strategic goals. The Union hoped to capture everything along the Red River in Louisiana and continue into Texas. Additionally, President Abraham Lincoln hoped to send a symbolic warning to France, which had set up a puppet government in Mexico and seemed to have designs on territorial expansion. Finally, Union officials wanted to capture cotton-producing regions, as cotton was in short supply in the North.

The plan called for Admiral David Dixon Porter to take a flotilla of 20 gunboats up the Red River while General Nathaniel Banks led 27,000 men along the western shore of the river. Porter's squadron entered the river on 12 MAR. Two days later, Fort Derussy fell to the Yankees and the ships moved upriver and captured Alexandria. The expedition was going well, but Banks was moving too slowly. He arrived two weeks after Porter took Alexandria, and continued to plod towards Shreveport. Banks traveled nearly 20 miles from the Red River, too far for the gunboats to offer any protection. On 8 APR, Banks' command was attacked and routed by Confederate General Richard Taylor, son of former U.S. president Zachary Taylor. The two sides fought again the next day, but this time the Yankees held off the Rebel pursuit.

The intimidated Banks elected to retreat back down the river before reaching Shreveport. Porter's ships followed, but the Red River was unusually low and the ships were stuck above some rapids near Alexandria. It appeared that the ships would have to be destroyed to keep them from falling into Confederate hands, but Lt. Colonel Joseph Bailey of Wisconsin, an engineer with a logging background, supervised several thousand soldiers in constructing a series of wing dams that raised the water level enough for the ships to pass. The campaign was deemed a failure—it drew Union strength away from other parts of the South and the expedition never reached Texas.

- **Mar 12 1920 – U.S. Navy:** USS H-1 Seawolf (SS-28) foundered and sunk off Santa Margarita Island, California. 4 died.



- **Mar 12 1938 – Pre WW2:** *Germany annexes Austria* » German troops march into Austria to annex the German-speaking nation for the Third Reich.

In early 1938, Austrian Nazis conspired for the second time in four years to seize the Austrian government by force and unite their nation with Nazi Germany. Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg, learning of the conspiracy, met with Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in the hopes of reasserting his country's independence but was instead bullied into naming several top Austrian Nazis to his cabinet. On 9 MAR, Schuschnigg called a national vote to resolve the question of Anschluss, or "annexation," once and for all. Before the plebiscite could take place, however, Schuschnigg gave in to pressure from Hitler and resigned on 11 MAR. In his resignation address, under coercion from the Nazis, he pleaded with Austrian forces not to resist a German "advance" into the country.



The next day, 12 MAR, Hitler accompanied German troops into Austria, where enthusiastic crowds met them. Hitler appointed a new Nazi government, and on 13 MAR the Anschluss was proclaimed. Austria existed as a federal state of Germany until the end of World War II, when the Allied powers declared the Anschluss void and reestablished an independent Austria. Schuschnigg, who had been imprisoned soon after resigning, was released in 1945.

- **Mar 12 1947 – Cold War:** *Truman Doctrine is announced* » In a dramatic speech to a joint session of Congress, President Harry S. Truman asks for U.S. assistance for Greece and Turkey to forestall communist domination of the two nations. Historians have often cited Truman's address, which came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, as the official declaration of the Cold War.

In February 1947, the British government informed the United States that it could no longer furnish the economic and military assistance it had been providing to Greece and Turkey since the end of World War II. The Truman administration believed that both nations were threatened by communism and it jumped at the chance to take a tough stance against the Soviet Union. In Greece, leftist forces had been battling the Greek royal government since the end of World War II. In Turkey,

the Soviets were demanding some manner of control over the Dardanelles, territory from which Turkey was able to dominate the strategic waterway from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.



On March 12, 1947, Truman appeared before a joint session of Congress to make his case. The world, he declared, faced a choice in the years to come. Nations could adopt a way of life “based upon the will of the majority” and governments that provided “guarantees of individual liberty” or they could face a way of life “based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority.” This latter regime, he indicated, relied upon “terror and oppression.” “The foreign policy and the national security of this country,” he claimed, were involved in the situations confronting Greece and Turkey. Greece, he argued, was “threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by communists.” It was incumbent upon the United States to support Greece so that it could “become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.” The “freedom-loving” people of Turkey also needed U.S. aid, which was “necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.” The president declared that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” Truman requested \$400 million in assistance for the two nations. Congress approved his request two months later.

The Truman Doctrine was a de facto declaration of the Cold War. Truman’s address outlined the broad parameters of U.S. Cold War foreign policy: the Soviet Union was the center of all communist activity and movements throughout the world; communism could attack through outside invasion or internal subversion; and the United States needed to provide military and economic assistance to protect nations from communist aggression.

Not everyone embraced Truman’s logic. Some realized that the insurgency in Greece was supported not by the Soviet Union, but by Yugoslavia’s Tito, who broke with the Soviet communists within a year. Additionally, the Soviets were not demanding control of the Dardanelles, but only assurances that this strategic waterway would not be used by Russia’s enemies—as the Nazis had used it during World War II. And whether U.S. assistance would result in democracy in Greece or Turkey was unclear. Indeed, both nations established repressive right-wing regimes in the years following the Truman Doctrine. Yet, the Truman Doctrine successfully convinced many that the United States was locked in a life-or-death struggle with the Soviet Union, and it set the guidelines for over 40 years of U.S.-Soviet relations.

- **Mar 12 1968 – Vietnam War:** *McCarthy does well in the Democratic primary* » Senator Eugene McCarthy (D-Minnesota), an outspoken critic of the Johnson administration’s policies in Vietnam, polls 42 percent of the vote in New Hampshire’s Democratic presidential primary. President Lyndon B. Johnson got 48 percent. A Harris poll later showed that anti-Johnson, rather than antiwar, sentiment provided the basis for McCarthy’s surprisingly strong performance.



McCarthy had been a contender to be President Lyndon B. Johnson's running mate in the 1964 election, but since then he had become increasingly disenchanted with Johnson's policies in Vietnam and the escalation of the war. In 1967, he published *The Limits of Power*, an assessment of U.S. foreign policy that was very critical of the Johnson administration. McCarthy announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination in January 1968, saying that he hoped to harness the growing antiwar sentiment in the country, particularly among the young. His showing in the New Hampshire primary astonished most of the political pundits. Johnson, frustrated with his inability to reach a solution in Vietnam and stunned by his narrow victory in New Hampshire, announced on March 31, 1968, that he would neither seek nor accept the nomination of his party for re-election.

The rest of McCarthy's campaign was almost an anticlimax. Senator Robert Kennedy of New York entered the race and won most of the Democratic primaries until his assassination in June. When the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago, a conflict immediately erupted over the party's Vietnam platform. While demonstrations against the war took place in the streets outside the convention hall, Vice President Hubert Humphrey won the party nomination.

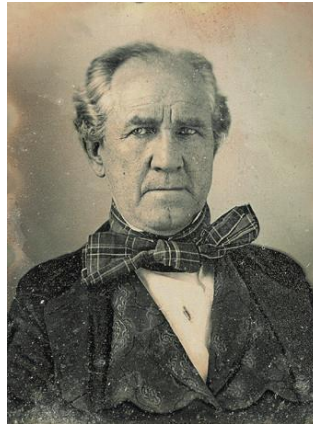
Humphrey was defeated in the general election by Republican Richard Nixon. McCarthy retired from the Senate in 1971, but his surprising showing in the primary was evidence of the strong antiwar sentiment in the country.

- **Mar 12 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Australians withdraw from South Vietnam* » The last remnants of the First Australian Task Force withdraw from Vietnam. The Australian government had first sent troops to Vietnam in 1964 with a small aviation detachment and an engineer civic action team. In May 1965, the Australians increased their commitment with the deployment of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR). The formation of the First Australian Task Force in 1966 established an Australian base of operations near Ba Ria in Phuoc Tuy province. The task force included an additional infantry battalion, a medium tank squadron, and a helicopter squadron, as well as signal, engineer, and other support forces. By 1969, Australian forces in Vietnam totaled an estimated 6,600 personnel.

The Australian contingent was part of the Free World Military Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam. By securing support from other nations, Johnson hoped to build an international consensus behind his policies in Vietnam. The effort was also known as the "many flags" program. Australia began to withdraw its troops in 1970, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment to South Vietnam.

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- **Mar 13 1836 – Texas Revolution:** *Houston retreats from Santa Anna’s army* » Less than a week after the disastrous defeat of Texas rebels at the Alamo, the newly commissioned Texan General Sam Houston begins a series of strategic retreats to buy time to train his ill-prepared army.



Revolutionary Texans had only formally announced their independence from Mexico 11 days earlier. On March 6, 1836, the separatists chose Sam Houston to be the commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army. Houston immediately departed for Gonzales, Texas, where the main force of the revolutionary army was stationed. When he arrived, he found that the Texan army consisted of 374 poorly dressed and ill-equipped men. Most had no guns or military experience, and they had only two days of rations.

Houston had little time to dwell on the situation, because he learned that the Mexican general Santa Anna was staging a siege of the Alamo in San Antonio. Before Houston could prepare his troops to rush to aid the defenders, however, word arrived that Santa Anna had wiped them out on March 6. Scouts reported that Santa Anna’s troops were heading east toward Gonzales. Unprepared to confront the Mexican army with his poorly trained force, Houston began a series of strategic retreats designed to give him enough time to whip his army into fighting shape.

Houston’s decision to retreat won him little but scorn from the Texas rebels. His troops and officers were eager to engage the Mexicans, and they chafed at Houston’s insistence on learning proper field maneuvers. Houston wisely continued to organize, train, and equip his troops so they would be prepared to meet Santa Anna’s army. Finally, after nearly a month of falling back, Houston ordered his men to turn around and head south to meet Santa Anna’s forces.

On 21 APR, Houston led his 783 troops in an attack on Santa Anna’s force of nearly twice that number near the confluence of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River. With the famous cry, “Remember the Alamo,” the Texans stormed the surprised Mexican forces. After a brief attempt at defense, the Mexican soldiers broke into a disorganized retreat, allowing the Texans to isolate and slaughter them. In a stunning victory, Houston’s army succeeded in killing or capturing nearly the entire Mexican force, including General Santa Anna, who was taken prisoner. Only two Texans were killed and 30 wounded.

Fearful of execution, Santa Anna signed an order calling for the immediate withdrawal of all Mexican troops from Texas soil. The Mexicans never again seriously threatened the independence of the Lone Star Republic.

- **Mar 13 1862 – Civil War:** The U.S. federal government forbids all Union army officers to return fugitive slaves, thus effectively annulling the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and setting the stage for the Emancipation Proclamation.
- **Mar 13 1865 – Civil War:** *Confederacy approves black soldiers* » With the main Rebel armies facing long odds against must larger Union armies, the Confederacy, in a desperate measure, reluctantly approves the use of black troops.



The situation was bleak for the Confederates in the spring of 1865. The Yankees had captured large swaths of Southern territory, General William T. Sherman's Union army was tearing through the Carolinas, and General Robert E. Lee was trying valiantly to hold the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, against General Ulysses S. Grant's growing force. Lee and Confederate President Jefferson Davis had only two options. One was for Lee to unite with General Joseph Johnston's army in the Carolinas and use the combined force to take on Sherman and Grant one at a time. The other option was to arm slaves, the last source of fresh manpower in the Confederacy.

The idea of enlisting blacks had been debated for some time. Arming slaves was essentially a way of setting them free, since they could not realistically be sent back to plantations after they had fought. General Patrick Cleburne had suggested enlisting slaves a year before, but few in the Confederate leadership considered the proposal, since slavery was the foundation of Southern society. One politician asked, "What did we go to war for, if not to protect our property?" Another suggested, "If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong." Lee weighed in on the issue and asked the Confederate government for help. "We must decide whether slavery shall be extinguished by our enemies and the slaves be used against us, or use them ourselves." Lee asked that the slaves be freed as a condition of fighting, but the bill that passed the Confederate Congress on March 13, 1865, did not stipulate freedom for those who served.

The measure did nothing to stop the destruction of the Confederacy. Several thousand blacks were enlisted in the Rebel cause, but they could not begin to balance out the nearly 200,000 blacks who fought for the Union.

- **Mar 13 1915 – WWI:** Battle of Neuve Chapelle - British forces end their three-day assault on the German trenches near the village of Neuve Chapelle in northern France, the first offensive. Allied forces captured a small salient 2,000 yards wide and 1,200 yards deep, along with 1,200 German prisoners, at the cost of 7,000 British and 4,200 Indian casualties.

- **Mar 13 1942 – WW2:** U.S. Army launches K-9 Corps » The Quartermaster Corps (QMC) of the United States Army begins training dogs for the newly established War Dog Program, or “K-9 Corps.”

Well over a million dogs served on both sides during World War I, carrying messages along the complex network of trenches and providing some measure of psychological comfort to the soldiers. The most famous dog to emerge from the war was Rin Tin Tin, an abandoned puppy of German war dogs found in France in 1918 and taken to the United States, where he made his film debut in the 1922 silent film *The Man from Hell’s River*. As the first bona fide animal movie star, Rin Tin Tin made the little-known German Shepherd breed famous across the country.

In the United States, the practice of training dogs for military purposes was largely abandoned after World War I. When the country entered World War II in December 1941, the American Kennel Association and a group called Dogs for Defense began a movement to mobilize dog owners to donate healthy and capable animals to the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army. Training began in March 1942, and that fall the QMC was given the task of training dogs for the U.S. Navy, Marines and Coast Guard as well.

The K-9 Corps initially accepted over 30 breeds of dogs, but the list was soon narrowed to seven: German Shepherds, Belgian sheep dogs, Doberman Pinschers, collies, Siberian Huskies, Malamutes and Eskimo dogs. Members of the K-9 Corps were trained for a total of 8 to 12 weeks. After basic obedience training, they were sent through one of four specialized programs to prepare them for work as sentry dogs, scout or patrol dogs, messenger dogs or mine-detection dogs. In active combat duty, scout dogs proved especially essential by alerting patrols to the approach of the enemy and preventing surprise attacks.



The top canine hero of World War II was Chips, a German Shepherd who served with the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division. Trained as a sentry dog, Chips broke away from his handlers and attacked an enemy machine gun nest in Italy, forcing the entire crew to surrender. The wounded Chips was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and the Purple Heart—all of which were later revoked due to an Army policy preventing official commendation of animals.

- **Mar 13 1943 – WW2:** In Bougainville, Japanese troops end their assault on American forces at Hill 700.

- **Mar 13 1943 – WW2:** The Holocaust: German forces liquidate the Jewish ghetto in Kraków, Poland sending most of its inhabitants to Belzec extermination camp & Plaszów slave-labor camp, and Auschwitz concentration camp for extermination.



Deportation of Jews from the Ghetto, March 1943

- **Mar 13 1944 – WW2:** *London suspends travel between Ireland and Britain* » All travel between Ireland and the United Kingdom is suspended, the result of the Irish government’s refusal to expel Axis-power diplomats within its borders.

In 1922, an independent Irish republic was established after generations of conflict between Ireland and Britain. One of the conditions of that agreement was that Britain would retain control of three naval bases along the Irish coast in order to continue Ireland’s defense. But as war loomed in the late 1930s, Irish Prime Minister Eamon de Valera negotiated an agreement that ended the British occupation of those naval bases; Ireland had declared a pre-emptive state of neutrality in any European war, and the presence of the Royal Navy on independent Irish soil violated that neutrality. De Valera did not want Ireland to become an object of attacks aimed at Britain.



De Valera was willing to bargain away Irish neutrality, though, in exchange for Northern Ireland’s being returned to the Irish Republic. The British were not willing to pay that price but did agree to end conscription in Northern Ireland once De Valera denounced conscription—because it forced Irish men to fight in what De Valera believed was an English war—as an “act of aggression.”

Irish neutrality was challenged in 1941, with German air raids against Dublin. It was challenged again in 1942, when the United States landed troops in Northern Ireland, under the understanding that it was under the control of its ally, Britain. De Valera protested. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was stunned at this intransigence and applied pressure to the de Valera government, attempting to change Ireland’s neutrality stance. De Valera did not relent. Finally, when the Irish prime minister refused to expel from Ireland the diplomats of the Axis powers, Britain retaliated by suspending all travel

between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom. Ireland did not flinch and, when the war ended, developed good relations with all the powers involved.

- **Mar 13 1954 – Vietnam War:** *Viet Minh attack French garrison* » A force of 40,000 Viet Minh with heavy artillery surround 15,000 French troops at Dien Bien Phu. French General Henri Navarre had positioned these forces 200 miles behind enemy lines in a remote area adjacent to the Laotian border. He hoped to draw the communists into a set-piece battle in which he hoped superior French firepower would destroy the enemy. He underestimated the enemy.



Viet Minh General Vo Nguyen Giap entrenched artillery in the surrounding mountains and massed five divisions around the French positions. The battle began with a massive Viet Minh artillery barrage, followed by an infantry assault. Fierce fighting continued to rage until May 7, 1954, when the Viet Minh overran the last French positions. The shock of the fall of Dien Bien Phu led France, already plagued by public opposition to the war, to agree to the independence of Vietnam at the Geneva Conference in 1954.

- **Mar 13 1961 – Cold War:** *Kennedy proposes Alliance for Progress* » A 10-year, multibillion-dollar aid program for Latin America is proposed by President Kennedy. The program came to be known as the Alliance for Progress and was designed to improve U.S. relations with Latin America, which had been severely damaged in recent years.

When Kennedy became president in 1961, U.S. relations with Latin America were at an all-time low. The Latin American republics were disappointed with U.S. economic assistance after World War II. They argued that they had supported America during the war by increasing their production of vital raw materials and keeping their prices low—when the United States began massive aid programs to Europe and Japan after the war, Latin American nations protested that they also deserved economic assistance. Their anger was apparent during Vice President Richard Nixon’s trip through the region in 1958, when a mob attacked his car at a stop in Caracas.

More troubling to American officials was the threat of communism in Latin America. In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency had funded and supplied a revolution that overthrew the leftist government of Guatemala. In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba and by 1961, the United States had severed relations with his government. In response to these developments, Kennedy made his plea for the Alliance for Progress. In requesting funds from Congress, the president stressed the need for improved literacy, land use, industrial productivity, health, and education in Latin America. The United States needed to help Latin America, where “millions of men and women suffer the daily degradations of hunger and poverty” and “discontent is growing.” The United States would provide

money, expertise, and technology to raise the standard of living for the people of Latin America, which would hopefully make the countries stronger and better able to resist communist influences.



In response to Kennedy's plea, Congress voted for an initial grant of \$500 million in May 1961. During the next 10 years, billions were spent on the Alliance, but its success was marginal and there were many reasons that the program was ultimately a failure. American congressmen were reluctant to provide funds for land redistribution programs in Latin America because they felt it smacked of socialism. Latin American elites directed most of the funds into pet projects that enriched themselves but did little to help the vast majority of their people. The Alliance certainly failed in its effort to bring democracy to Latin America: by the time the program faded away in the early-1970s, 13 governments in Latin America had been replaced by military rule.

- **Mar 13 1975 – Vietnam War:** Ban Me Thuot falls » Ban Me Thuot, capital of Darlac Province in the Central Highlands, falls to North Vietnamese troops.

In late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire established by the Paris Peace Accords, the North Vietnamese launched Campaign 275. The objective of this campaign was to capture Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The battle began on 4 MAR and the North Vietnamese quickly encircled the city with five main force divisions, cutting it off from outside support.

As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire province, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas to the south. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic and the South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force while the North Vietnamese continued their attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally to the North Vietnamese on April 30 and the war was over.

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- **Mar 14 1776 – American Revolution:** Alexander Hamilton is named captain of artillery company » Alexander Hamilton receives his commission as captain of a New York artillery company. Throughout the rest of 1776, Captain Hamilton established himself as a great military leader as he directed his artillery company in several battles in and around New York City. In March 1777,

Hamilton's performance came to the attention of General George Washington and he was commissioned lieutenant colonel and personal aide to General Washington in the Continental Army.



Alexander Hamilton in the Uniform of the New York Artillery

After serving under Washington for four years, Hamilton resigned in February 1781 after a dispute with the general, but remained in the army. In July 1781, Hamilton took a position as commander of a regiment of New York troops and served with distinction at the Battle of Yorktown in the fall of that year.

After resigning from the army and working at a law practice, Hamilton was elected to the Continental Congress from New York in 1782, where he quickly became known as a proponent of a stronger national government. In the years to come, Hamilton became well-known for his political philosophy and published several papers with James Madison and John Jay that became known as the Federalist Papers.

Hamilton became the first secretary of the treasury in September 1789 after the election of President George Washington and served in that office until resigning in January 1795. Hamilton then returned to the private sector and a law practice in New York City, but remained a close advisor to President Washington.

In 1800, Hamilton became embroiled in a bitter dispute when he threw his support behind President John Adams' reelection campaign instead of presidential candidate Aaron Burr's. After his defeat, Burr ran for governor of New York in 1804; Hamilton again opposed his candidacy. Humiliated, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel on July 11, 1804, in Weehawken, New Jersey. Alexander Hamilton was shot in the duel and died of his wound the following day, July 12, in New York at the age of 49.

- **Mar 14 1780 – American Revolution:** Spanish forces capture Fort Charlotte in Mobile, Alabama, the last British frontier post capable of threatening New Orleans in Spanish Louisiana.
- **Mar 14 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of New Bern, North Carolina* » Union General Ambrose Burnside captures North Carolina's second largest city and closes another port through which the Confederates could slip supplies.

The capture of New Bern continued Burnside's success along the Carolina coast. Five weeks earlier, he led an amphibious force against Roanoke Island between Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The Yankees captured the island on February 8; now Burnside moved against New Bern on the mainland. On March 13, he landed 12,000 troops along the Neuse River, 15 miles south of New Bern.

Accompanied by 13 gunboats, Burnside's army marched up river to face 4,000 Confederate troops commanded by General Lawrence O. Branch.

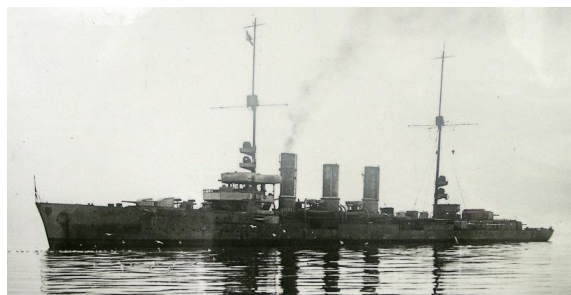
The city was protected by extensive defenses, but Branch did not have enough soldiers to properly staff them. He concentrated his men along the inner works a few miles downriver from New Bern. Early on the morning of March 14, Burnside's men attacked in a heavy fog, and two of the three Yankee brigades crashed into the fortifications. General Jesse Reno's brigade struck the weakest part of the line, where an inexperienced Rebel militia unit tried to hold off the Federals. Burnside's third brigade joined Reno and the Confederate line collapsed. That afternoon, Union gunboats steamed into New Bern.



Union casualties for the battle were around 90 killed and 380 wounded, while the Confederates suffered approximately 60 killed, 100 wounded, and 400 captured. The conflict produced a Confederate hero, Colonel Zebulon Vance, who rescued his regiment by using small boats to bypass a bridge set afire by his comrades. Vance was elected governor of the state later that year.

- **Mar 14 1864 – Civil War:** Union troops occupy Fort de Russy, Louisiana.
- **Mar 14 1915 – WWI:** *German cruiser Dresden sinks* » the British ships Kent and Glasgow corner the German light cruiser Dresden in Cumberland Bay, off the coast of Chile. After raising the white flag, the Dresden's crew abandoned and scuttled the ship, which sank with its German ensign flying.

Dresden, a 3,600-ton light cruiser, was one of the fastest ships in the German Imperial Navy, capable of traveling at speeds of up to 24.5 knots. The sister ship of the Emden, it was one of the first German ships to be built with modern steam-turbine engines. The British navy possessed faster ships, but luckily for Dresden, it had never had to face one. In continuous service since its introduction in 1909, Dresden traveled over 21,000 miles between August 1, 1914 and March 1915, more than any other German cruiser in action during the early months of World War I.



When war broke out in the summer of 1914, Dresden was patrolling the Caribbean Sea, safeguarding German investments and German citizens living abroad in the region. On July 20,

during a bitter civil war in Mexico, Dresden gave safe passage to the fleeing Mexican president, Victoriano Huerta, transporting him and his family to Jamaica, where they received asylum from the British government. Shortly thereafter, news from Europe arrived of Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and the imminent possibility of war, and the German Admiralty put its fleet on alert.

By the first week of August, the great nations of Europe were at war. The Dresden was ordered to head to South America to attack British shipping interests there; it sunk several merchant ships on its way to Cape Horn, at the southern tip of Chile, and eluded pursuit by the British naval squadron in the region, commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock. In October, the ship joined Admiral Maximilian von Spee's German East Asia Squadron at Easter Island in the South Pacific. On November 1, Spee's squadron, including Dresden, scored a crushing victory over the British in the Battle of Coronel, sinking two cruisers with all hands aboard—including Cradock, who went down with his flagship, Good Hope.

Five weeks later, the speedy Dresden was the only German ship to escape destruction at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on November 8, when the British light cruisers *Inflexible* and *Invincible*, commanded by Sir Doveton Sturdee, sank four of Spee's ships, including *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig* and *Nurnberg*. As a crew member of Dresden wrote later of watching one of the other ships sink: Each one of us knew he would never see his comrades again—no one on board the cruiser can have had any illusions about his fate. Dresden escaped under cover of bad weather south of the Falkland Islands.

For the next several months, Dresden consistently avoided capture by the British navy, sinking a number of cargo ships and seeking refuge in the network of channels and bays in southern Chile. On March 8, the ship put into an island off the Chilean coast, in Cumberland Bay; its captain, Fritz Emil von Luedecke, had decided the ship needed serious repairs in the wake of such heavy and extended use. Six days later, after picking up one of the many pleas for fuel sent by Luedecke in the hopes of reaching any passing coal ships in the area, Kent and Glasgow found Dresden. When Kent opened fire, Dresden sent a few shots back, but soon raised the white flag of surrender. After a German representative negotiated a truce with the British sailors to stall for time, Luedecke ordered his crew to abandon the ship and scuttle it. Dresden sank slowly at first, then sharply listed to the side. Amid cheers from both the British on board their two ships and the German sailors that had escaped onto land, Dresden disappeared beneath the water, its German ensign flag flying, thus ending the five-year and 21,000-mile career of one of Germany's most famous World War I commerce-raiding ships.

- **Mar 14 1916 – WWI:** Battle of Verdun – German attack on Mort–Homme ridge West of Verdun.
- **Mar 14 1943 – WW2:** *Germans recapture Kharkov* » German troops re-enter Kharkov, the second largest city in the Ukraine, which had changed hands several times in the battle between the USSR and the invading German forces.

Kharkov was a high-priority target for the Germans when they invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, as the city was a railroad and industrial center, and had coal and iron mines nearby. Among the most important industries for Stalin's war needs was the Kharkov Tanks Works, which he moved out of Kharkov in December 1941 into the Ural Mountains. In fact, Joseph Stalin was so desperate to

protect Kharkov that he rendered a “no retreat” order to his troops, which produced massive casualties within the Red Army over time.



Hitler’s troops first entered Kharkov in October 1941. In May 1942, the Soviets launched an effective surprise attack on the Germans just south of Kharkov, enabling the Red Army to advance closer to the occupied city, and finally re-enter it on February 16, 1943. Hitler began planning an immediate recapture as early as February 21—Red Army Day—hoping that success there would reverse the Soviet momentum of the previous three months. On March 10, German troops launched their major offensive; the Soviets had already suffered the loss of 23,000 soldiers and 634 tanks in the recapture and defense of Kharkov and were forced to rely on 1,000 Czech troops for aid.

On 14 MAR, the tide in Kharkov turned again, and the Germans took the city once more. “We have shown the Ivans we can withstand their terrible winter. It can hold no fear for us again,” wrote an SS officer. This proved to be a meaningless boast when the Red Army liberated the city that summer, and untrue, as the brutal Soviet winter actually did take a terrifying toll on German troops.

- **Mar 14 1945 – WW2:** The R.A.F.’s first operational use of the Grand Slam bomb, Bielefeld, Germany.
- **Mar 14 1947 – US*Philippines:** The United States signs a 99-year lease on naval bases in the Philippines.
- **Mar 14 1951 – Korean War:** U.N. forces recapture Seoul for the second time during the Korean War.



- **Mar 14 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Allies launch second wave of Rolling Thunder* » Twenty-four South Vietnamese Air Force planes, led by Vice-Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky and supported by U.S. jets, bomb the barracks and depots on Con Co (“Tiger”) Island, 20 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. The

next day, 100 U.S. Air Force jets and carrier-based bombers struck the ammunition depot at Phu Qui, 100 miles south of Hanoi. This was the second set of raids in Operation Rolling Thunder and the first in which U.S. planes used napalm.

Operation Rolling Thunder was a result of President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision in February to undertake the sustained bombing of North Vietnam that he and his advisers had been contemplating for a year. The operation was designed to interdict North Vietnamese transportation routes in the southern part of North Vietnam and slow infiltration of personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. In July 1966, Rolling Thunder was expanded to include the bombing of North Vietnamese ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities, and in the spring of 1967, it was further expanded to include power plants, factories, and airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The White House closely controlled operation Rolling Thunder and President Johnson sometimes personally selected the targets. From March 1965 to November 1968, Air Force planes flew 153,784 attack sorties against North Vietnam, while the Navy and Marine Corps added another 152,399. On Dec. 31, 1967, the Department of Defense announced that 864,000 tons of American bombs had been dropped on North Vietnam during Rolling Thunder. The U.S. dropped 653,000 tons in the Korean War and 503,000 tons in the Pacific theater during World War II.

The CIA estimated that the operation inflicted \$500 million in damage on the North. The agency estimated that by April 1967, 52,000 casualties, including 21,000 deaths, had occurred in the air raids. An estimated 75 percent of casualties were involved in military or quasi-military operations. U.S. government estimates put the number of civilian deaths stemming from the operation at 30,000. A total of nearly 900 U.S. aircraft were lost during Operation Rolling Thunder. The operation continued, with occasional suspensions, until President Johnson, under increasing domestic political pressure, halted it on October 31, 1968.

- **Mar 14 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon discusses the possibility of U.S. troop withdrawals* » At a news conference, President Richard Nixon says there is no prospect for a U.S. troop reduction in the foreseeable future because of the ongoing enemy offensive. Nixon stated that the prospects for withdrawal would hinge on the level of enemy activity, progress in the Paris peace talks, and the ability of the South Vietnamese to defend themselves. Despite these public comments, Nixon and his advisers were secretly discussing U.S. troop withdrawals. On June 8, at a conference on Midway Island with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, Nixon formally announced a new policy that included intensified efforts to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces so that U.S. forces could be gradually withdrawn. This program became known as “Vietnamization.” The first U.S. troop withdrawals occurred in the fall of 1969 with the departure of the headquarters and a brigade from the 9th Infantry Division.
- **Mar 14 1990 – Cold War:** *Gorbachev elected president of the Soviet Union* » The Congress of People's Deputies elects General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev as the new president of the Soviet Union. While the election was a victory for Gorbachev, it also revealed serious weaknesses in his power base that would eventually lead to the collapse of his presidency in December 1991.

Gorbachev's election in 1990 was far different from other “elections” previously held in the Soviet Union. Since coming to power in 1985, Gorbachev had worked hard to open up the political process

in the Soviet Union, pushing through legislation that eliminated the Communist Party's monopoly on power and establishing the Congress of People's Deputies. The public at large elected the Congress by secret ballot. By 1990, however, Gorbachev was facing criticism from both reformers and communist hard-liners. The reformers, such as Boris Yeltsin, criticized Gorbachev for the slow pace of his reform agenda. Communist hard-liners, on the other hand, were appalled by what they saw as Gorbachev's retreat from Marxist principles. In an attempt to push forward his reform program, Gorbachev led a movement that amended the Soviet constitution, including writing a section establishing a new and more powerful presidency, a position that had previously been largely symbolic.



On March 14, 1990, the Congress of People's Deputies elected Gorbachev to a five-year term as president. While this was certainly a victory for Gorbachev, the election also vividly demonstrated the problems he faced in trying to formulate a domestic consensus supporting his political reform program. Gorbachev had worked assiduously to make sure that the Congress gave him the necessary two-thirds majority, including making repeated threats to resign if the majority was not achieved. Had he not received the necessary votes, he would have had to campaign in a general election against other candidates. Gorbachev believed that a general election would result in chaos in an already unsteady Russia; others in the Soviet Union attributed his actions to fear that he might lose such an election. The final vote in the Congress was extremely close, and Gorbachev achieved his two-thirds majority by a slim 46 votes.

Gorbachev won the presidency, but by 1991 his domestic critics were pillorying him for the nation's terrible economic performance and faltering control over the Soviet empire. In December 1991 he resigned as president, and the Soviet Union dissolved. Despite the criticism he received, Gorbachev is credited for instituting a dizzying number of reforms that loosened the tight grip of communism on the Soviet people.

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- **Mar 15 1781 – American Revolution:** Battle of Guilford Court House, SC 1,900 British troops under General Charles Cornwallis defeat an American force numbering 4,400. Casualties and losses: US 1,272 - GB 538.
- **Mar 15 1783 – American Revolution:** *Washington puts an end to the Newburgh Conspiracy* » On the morning of March 15, 1783, General George Washington makes a surprise appearance at an assembly of army officers at Newburgh, New York, to calm the growing frustration and distrust they had been openly expressing towards Congress in the previous few weeks. Angry with Congress for failing to honor its promise to pay them and for its failure to settle accounts for repayment of food and

clothing, officers began circulating an anonymous letter condemning Congress and calling for a revolt.

When word of the letter and its call for an unsanctioned meeting of officers reached him, Washington issued a general order forbidding any unsanctioned meetings and called for a general assembly of officers for 15 MAR. At the meeting, Washington began his speech to the officers by saying, “Gentlemen: By an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together; how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! How unmilitary! And how subversive of all order and discipline...”

Washington continued by pledging, “to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor.” He added, “Let me entreat you, gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained; let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress.”

When he finished, Washington removed a letter from his breast pocket that he had received from a member of the Continental Congress. He hesitated for a moment as he looked down at the letter before fumbling to retrieve a pair of spectacles from his pocket. Before reading the letter, Washington, in an almost apologetic tone said, “Gentlemen, you must pardon me. I have grown old in the service of my country and now find that I am growing blind.” The eyes of most of his audience filled with tears. The content of the letter became irrelevant as the assembled officers realized that Washington had given as much or more in the service of the new nation as any of them. Within minutes, the officers voted unanimously to express confidence in Congress and their country.

In a letter to the Continental Congress dated March 18, 1783, Washington wrote to assure the body that the unrest of officers was over, writing, “The result of the proceedings of the grand convention of the officers, which I have the honor of enclosing to your Excellency for the inspection of Congress, will, I flatter myself, be considered as the last glorious proof of patriotism which could have been given by men who aspired to the distinction of a Patriot army; and will not only confirm their claim to the justice, but will increase their title to the gratitude of their country.”

- **Mar 15 1831 – Pre Civil War:** *Edward A. Perry born* » Confederate General Edward Aylesworth Perry is born in Richmond, Massachusetts. The transplanted Yankee led a Florida brigade during the Civil War, and served as governor of the state after the war.



Perry received his education at Lee Academy in Massachusetts and Yale University. In 1852, he moved to Georgia to teach school and study law. After a sojourn in Alabama, he settled in Pensacola,

Florida. When the war erupted, Perry took up arms for his adopted state, becoming a captain in the Pensacola Rifle Rangers. His company was later absorbed into the 2nd Florida Infantry. Perry participated in the occupation of the Pensacola navy yard before joining the Confederate army in Virginia.

The 2nd Florida fought in the 1862 Peninsular Campaign, defending Yorktown, Virginia, in the face of General George B. McClellan's invading Union army. Perry became the regiment's commander when Colonel George Ward was killed near Williamsburg, Virginia, and Perry led the unit through hard fighting during the Seven Days' Battles in June 1862. Three months later, the Floridians fought at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland and suffered heavy losses. Perry was promoted to brigadier general and received command of two other Florida regiments. He fought at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but typhoid fever caused him to miss the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1863, where his brigade lost more than half of its men.

Perry returned to command, but was seriously wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia in May 1864. He was forced to relinquish control of his brigade, and after recovering spent the rest of the war commanding reserve troops in Alabama. He served as governor of Florida from 1884 to 1888, and in that post signed a bill providing pensions for Confederate veterans. Perry died from a stroke on October 15, 1889, in Kerrville, Texas, and was buried in St. John's Cemetery in Pensacola.

- **Mar 15 1864 - Civil War:** The Red River Campaign - U.S. Navy fleet arrives at Alexandria, Louisiana.
- **Mar 15 1916 – Pancho Villa:** President Woodrow Wilson sends 4,800 United States troops over the U.S.–Mexico border to pursue Pancho Villa.
- **Mar 15 1917 – WWI:** *Russian czar abdicates* » During the February Revolution, Czar Nicholas II, ruler of Russia since 1894, is forced to abdicate the throne on this day in 1917, after strikes and general revolts break out in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg).



Crowned on May 26, 1894, Nicholas was a relatively weak and ineffectual leader, which did not help the autocracy he sought to preserve over a people desperate for change. Russia's disastrous loss to the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War exacerbated discontent among the Russian population and led to the Russian Revolution of 1905, which the czar calmed only after signing a manifesto promising reform, representative government—in the form of Dumas, or assemblies—and basic civil liberties in Russia. Nicholas soon retracted most of these concessions, however, repeatedly dissolving the Dumas when they opposed him, and radical forces within Russia, most notably the Bolsheviks, a revolutionary-minded socialist group founded by Vladimir Lenin, begin to gain widespread support.

In 1914, Nicholas led his country into another costly war—World War I—and discontent in Russia grew as food became scarce, ill-equipped soldiers became war-weary and devastating defeats on the Eastern Front demonstrated the czar's incompetent leadership.

After the outbreak of the so-called February Revolution in early March 1917 (Russia used the Julian calendar at the time), the army garrison at Petrograd joined striking workers in demanding socialist reforms, and Czar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. Nicholas and his family were first held at the Czarskoye Selo Palace, then in the Yekaterinburg Palace near Tobolsk, where they remained during the rise to power of Lenin's Bolsheviks and Russia's exit from World War I. In July 1918, the advance of counterrevolutionary forces during the Russian Civil War caused the soviet, or Bolshevik council, in power in Yekaterinburg to fear that Nicholas might be rescued. After a secret meeting, the soviet passed a death sentence on the imperial family, and, on July 16, 1918, Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, their children and their remaining servants were shot to death.

- **Mar 15 1939 – WW2:** Hitler's forces invade and occupy Czechoslovakia—a nation sacrificed on the altar of the Munich Pact, which was a vain attempt to prevent Germany's imperial aims. Czechoslovakia ceases to exist.
- **Mar 15 1943 – WW2:** Third Battle of Kharkov - The last great victory of German arms in the eastern front. In a series of battles the German counterstrike led to the destruction of approximately 52 Soviet divisions and the recapture of the cities of Kharkov and Belgorod. Casualties and losses: SU 86,469 – Ger 11,500
- **Mar 15 1943 – WW2:** USS Triton (SS-201) sunk either by Japanese destroyer Satsuki or submarine chaser Ch 24 north of Admiralty Islands. 74 killed.
- **Mar 15 1944 – WW2:** Battle of Monte Cassino - Cassino, Italy is destroyed by Allied bombing.



The rebuilt Abbey of Monte Cassino and Monte Cassino in ruins after Allied bombing

- **Mar 15 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Army Chief of Staff reports on South Vietnam* » Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, reports on his recent visit to Vietnam to President Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. He admitted that the recent air raids ordered by President Johnson had not affected the course of the war and said he would like to assign an American division to hold coastal enclaves and defend the Central Highlands.

General Johnson also advocated creating a four-division force of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and U.S. troops to patrol the Demilitarized Zone along the border separating North and South Vietnam and Laos. Nothing ever came of General Johnson's recommendation on the SEATO troops, but President Johnson ordered the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Vietnam in May 1965 and followed it with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in September of the same year. These forces, along with the first contingent of U.S. Marines—which had arrived in March—were only the first of a massive American build up. By 1969, there were more than 540,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

- **Mar 15 1973 – Vietnam War:** *President Nixon hints at reintervention* » President Nixon hints that the United States might intervene again in Vietnam to prevent communist violations of the truce. A cease-fire under the provisions of the Paris Peace Accords had gone into effect on January 27, 1973, but was quickly and repeatedly violated by both sides as they jockeyed for control of territory in South Vietnam. Very quickly, both sides resumed heavy fighting in what came to be called the “cease-fire war.”

Nixon had been instrumental in convincing the reluctant South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu to sign the peace treaty, promising him repeatedly that, “We will respond with full force should the settlements be violated by North Vietnam.” As the fighting continued throughout 1973 and into 1974, Thieu appealed to Nixon to make good on his promises. For his part, Nixon was increasingly embroiled in the developing Watergate scandal, and resigned from office in August 1974. His successor, Gerald Ford, was unable to persuade a hostile Congress to provide the promised support to South Vietnam. The United States did nothing when the North Vietnamese launched their final offensive in the spring of 1975. South Vietnam was defeated in less than 55 days, surrendering unconditionally to the North Vietnamese on 30 APR.

- **Mar 15 1989 – VA:** The Veterans Administration is elevated to a Cabinet-level agency under Public Law 100-527

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